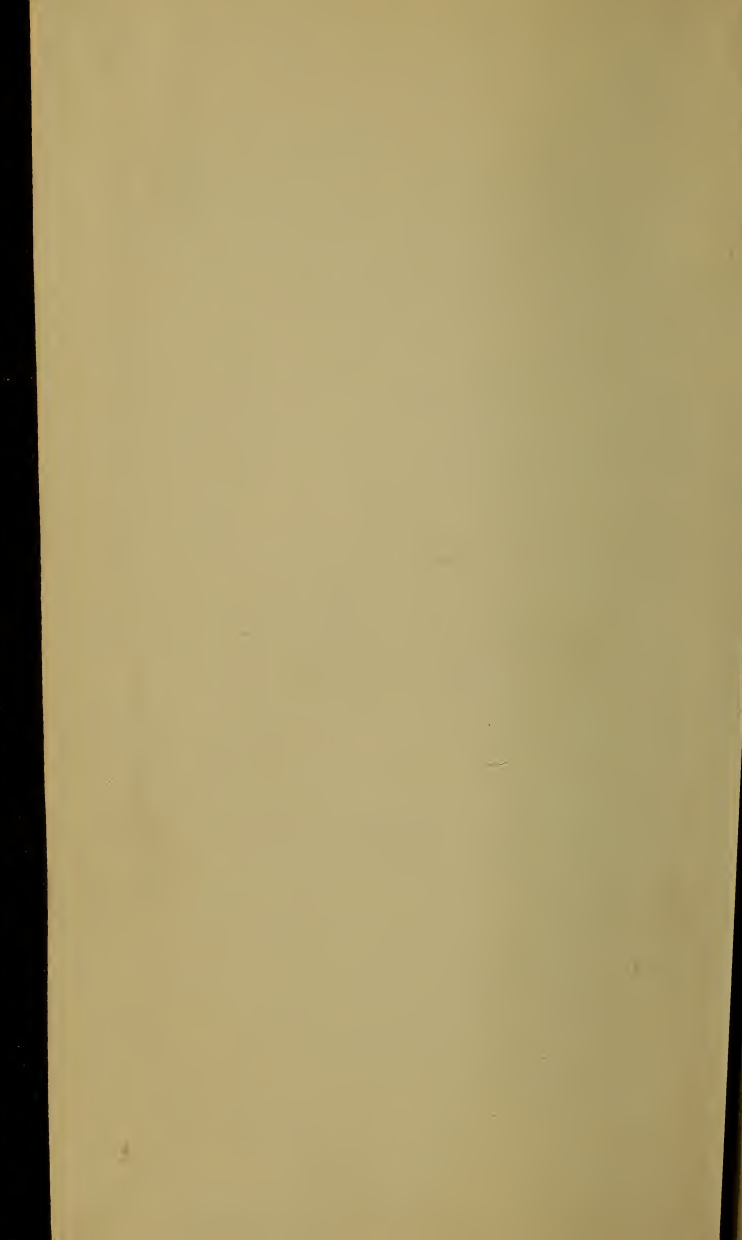




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THE
GOSPEL-MYSTERY
OF
SANCTIFICATION,
OPENED,

IN SUNDRY PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS:

EDITED ESPECIALLY TO THE CASE OF THOSE WHO LABOR UNDER
THE GUILT AND POWER OF INDWELLING SIN.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A SERMON ON JUSTIFICATION.

BY MR. WALTER MARSHALL,
LATE PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL.

~~~~~  
"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise  
and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things  
which are mighty," &c.—1 Cor. i. 27-31.  
~~~~~

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P R E F A C E .

READER,

MR. WALTER MARSHALL, composer of these directions how to attain to that practice and manner of life, which we call holiness, righteousness or godliness, was educated in New College of Oxford, and was a fellow of the said college; and afterwards he was chosen a fellow of the college of Winchester: but was put under the Bartholomew Bushel, with near two thousand more lights, (a sin not yet repented of,) whose illuminations made the land a Goshen. He was esteemed a Presbyterian; and was called to be pastor to a people at Gosport in Hampshire, where he shined, though he had not the public oil. The substance of these meditations was there spun out of his own experiences; he having been much exercised with troubled thoughts, and that for many years, and had, by many mortifying methods, sought peace of conscience; but, notwithstanding all, his troubles still increased. Whereupon he consulted others, particularly Mr. Baxter, whose writings he had been much conversant with; who thereupon told Mr. Marshall, he took them too legally. He afterwards consulted an eminent divine, Dr. T. G., giving him an account of the state of his soul, and particularizing his sins, which lay heavy on his conscience; who, in his reply, told him, he had forgot to mention the greatest sin of all, the sin of unbelief, in not believing on the Lord Jesus for the remission of his sins, and sanctifying his nature. Hereupon he set himself to the studying and preaching Christ, and attained to eminent holiness, great peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Mr. Marshall's dying words were these, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our

Lord ;” having but just before said to those about him, “That he now died in the full persuasion of the truth, and, in the comfort of that doctrine which he had preached ;”—the sum whereof is contained in the ensuing discourse.

Some time since, he was translated by death, Elijah-like, dropping these sheets as his mantle for succeeding Elishas to go forth with, for the conversion of sinners, and comfort of drooping souls.

These papers are the profound experiences of a studious holy soul, learned of the Father, coming from his very heart; and smell of no party or design, but for holiness and happiness. Yet it is to be feared, they will scarcely go down with the heady notionalists of this age, who are of the tribe of Reuben, wavering with every wind of modish doctrine; but in Judah they will be praised. And we hope that many shrubs and cedars may hereby advance in knowledge and comfort. But, not to detain you longer, read over all these directions, that you may fully understand the author, or read none. If you do it with the serious humble spirit in which they were wrote, it may be hoped, (the matter being so weighty, and from so able a hand) through the grace of God, they will sink into thy conscience, and make thee a solid Christian. full of faith, holiness, and consolation.

N. N.

July 21, 1692.

The author of these directions was well known to me, and was with me in my house a month together, above twenty years past; and I esteem him a person deserving the character which this preface giveth him.

T. Woodcock.

July 21, 1692.

RECOMMENDATORY PREFACE,

BY

ALEX. HAMILTON, EBENEZER ERSKINE, RALPH ERSKINE,
J. WARDLAW, JO. GIB, AND JA. OGILVIE.

[*Prefixed to the Edition printed at Edinburgh, Anno 1733.*]

THIS excellent treatise of Mr. MARSHALL's, though it be well known among the godly in England, where it has undergone a twofold edition; yet, this being the first time of its publication in Scotland, where it is but known to a few, we could not refuse, at the desire of those concerned in the publication of it among us, to declare, that, as we have perused the book ourselves with great edification and pleasure, so we know it hath had the high approbation and testimony of many eminent for grace and holiness; and judge the publication of it at this time of day seasonable among us, for promoting practical religion and godliness, and for giving a just view of the vast odds there is betwixt heathenish morality, adorned with the finest flourishes of human rhetoric, and true Gospel holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. And this our testimony we judged to be well supported by the words of that great and evangelic person, Mr. Robert Traill, late minister of the Gospel in the city of London, in his postscript to a pamphlet, entitled, *A vindication of the Protestant doctrine concerning justification, and of its preachers and professors, from the unjust charge of Antinomianism*. "I think (says he) that Dr. Owen's excellent book of Justification, and Mr. Marshall's book of the Mystery of Sanctification by faith in Jesus Christ, are such vindications and confirmations of the Protestant doctrine, against which I fear no effectual

opposition. — Mr. Marshall was a holy and retired person, and is only known to the most of us by his book lately published. The book is a deep, practical, well-jointed discourse, and requires a more than ordinary attention in reading of it with profit. And, if it be singly used, I look upon it as one of the most useful books the world hath seen for many years. Its excellence is, that it leads the serious reader directly to Jesus Christ, and cuts the sinews and overturns the foundation of the new divinity by the same argument of Gospel holiness by which many attempt to overturn the old. And, as it hath already had the seal of high approbation by many judicious Ministers and Christians that have read it; so I fear not but it will stand firm as a rock against all opposition, and will prove good seed, and food, and light to many hereafter." This testimony, abstracting from human frailties and escapes, to which the greatest men are liable while they know but in part, we homologate by our subscriptions.

A R E C O M M E N D A T I O N ,

BY

THE REV. MR. ADAM GIB,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN THE ASSOCIATE CONGREGATION OF
EDINBURGH.

THOUGH the due recommendations foregoing, wherewith these following directions have been formerly sent abroad, be what I pretend not to add any weight unto by my assent; there seems not, however, anything superfluous, in applying, unto two sorts of persons, an advice which hath been already given, with respect to the reading of this book.

Among the professors of a religious course, some do still adhere unto a legal scheme of holiness, vainly making it the reason of their peace and hope, or, at least, of their venturing to found both on Christ; and others are reconciled unto an evangelical scheme of holiness, verily making it the result of their peace and hope, as already founded on Christ, freely offered to them in the Gospel.

The correction which one of these sorts, and the instruction in righteousness which both of them need, may be peculiarly gained from this book: and, for these purposes, they are earnestly entreated to peruse it completely, and in the same order wherein written: so that the one sort may not, from looking first into the latter part thereof, throw it aside as Antinomian; nor the other sort, from looking only into the former part, throw it aside as legal.

In fine, whereas I have scarcely ever been acquainted with any practical composure, of human product, so evangelical, in a thread more connect, and a method more exact, than this: I equally despair, that any shall reap true benefit, in a partial and confused reading; and hope, that excellent fruit

shall, through the divine blessing, redound therefrom, unto such as may read it otherwise.

To proceed thus far in compliance with the inclination of some gentlemen concerned in this Edition, is presumed by

ADAM GIB.

EDINBURGH. Dec. 31, 1744.

TO THE BOOKSELLER.

SIR :—

It gives me no small pleasure to hear, that you are going to republish Mr. MARSHALL'S *Gospel-Mystery of Sanctification*.* The instruction, consolation, and spiritual improvement, which I myself have received from that solid and judicious treatise, excite in me a pleasing hope, that it may be equally instructive and advantageous to others.

The recommendation of it in *Theron and Aspasio*, with which you propose to introduce the new edition, is at your service. To this proposal I consent the more readily, because Mr. Marshall's book may be looked upon as no improper supplement to those dialogues and letters, the author of which intended to have closed his plan, with a dissertation on practical holiness, or evangelical obedience. But this design was dropped: partly, on account of his very declining health; partly, because the work swelled under his hands, far beyond his expectation.

He has been advised, once more to resume the pen; and treat that grand subject, with some degree of copiousness and particularity. If he should be enabled to execute, what he acknowledges to be expedient, the doctrines already discussed, and the privileges already displayed, will furnish the principal materials for his essay. Justification, free justification, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, is the sacred fleece from which he would spin his thread, and weave his garment; agreeably to that important text, *Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God.*†—If

* It is said, by the very best judge of propriety in sacred writing, *Great is the mystery of godliness*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. This passage, I presume, Mr. Marshall had in his view, when he pitched upon a title for his book. And this passage will render it superior to all censure, unexceptionally just and proper.

† 1 Cor. vi. 20.

Providence, in all things wise, and in all things gracious, should see fit to withhold either time or ability for the accomplishment of my purpose, I do, by these presents, nominate and depute Mr. Marshall, to supply my lack of service.

Mr. Marshall expresses my thoughts; he prosecutes my scheme; and not only pursues the same end, but proceeds in the same way. I shall therefore rejoice in the prospect of having the *Gospel-Mystery of Sanctification* stand as a fourth volume to *Theron and Aspasio*. Might I be allowed, without the charge of irreverence, to use the beautiful images of an inspired writer, I could with great satisfaction say, *If this be a wall, that will build upon it a palace of ivory: if this be a door, that will enclose it with boards of cedar.**

Mr. Marshall represents true holiness as consisting in the love of God, and the love of man:—that unforced, unfeigned, and most rational love of God, which arises from a discovery of his unspeakable mercy and infinite kindness to us; that cordial, disinterested, and universal love of man, which flows from the possession of a satisfactory and delightful portion in the LORD JEHOVAH. These duties, of love to our Creator and our fellow-creatures, are regarded as the sum and substance of the moral law; as the root from which all other branches of pure and undefiled religion spring.—Holiness, thus stated, is considered, not as the means, but as a part, a distinguished part of our salvation; or rather, as the very central point, in which all the means of grace, and all the ordinances of religion, terminate.

Man in a natural state is absolutely incapable of practising this holiness or enjoying this happiness.—If you ask, What is meant by a natural state? It is that state, in which we are under the guilt of sin, and the curse of the law; are subject to the power of Satan, and influenced by evil propensities.—From this state none are released, but by being united to Christ; or, as the apostle speaks, by Christ *dwelling in the heart through faith.†*

Faith, according to Mr. Marshall, is a real persuasion, that God is pleased to give Christ and his salvation; to give him freely without any recommending qualifications, or preparatory conditions; to give him, not to *some* sinners only, but to *me* a sinner in particular.—It is likewise an actual

* Cant. viii. 9.

† Eph. iii. 17.

receiving of Christ, with all the benefits, privileges, and promises of the Gospel; in pursuance of the divine gift, and on no other warrant than the divine grant.—This last office is particularly insisted on, as an essential part, or as the principal act of faith, to perform which, there is no rational, no possible way; unless, as our author declares, we do in some measure, persuade and assure ourselves,* that Christ and his salvation are ours.

As faith is such a persuasion of the heart, and such a reception of Christ, it assures the soul of salvation by its own act; antecedent to all reflection on its fruits or effects, on marks or evidences.—It assures the soul of acquittance from guilt, and reconciliation to God; of a title to the everlasting inheritance, and of grace sufficient for every case of need.—By the exercise of this faith and the enjoyment of these blessings, we are sanctified; conscience is pacified, and the heart purified; we are delivered from the dominion of sin, disposed to holy tempers, and furnished for a holy practice.

Here, I apprehend, our author will appear singular. This is the place in which he seems to go quite out of the common road. The generality of serious people look upon these unspeakable blessings as the reward of holiness; to be received, after we have sincerely practised universal holiness; not as necessary, previously necessary, to perform any act of true holiness. This is the stumbling-block, which our legal minds, dim with prejudice, and swollen with pride, will hardly get over.—However, these endowments of our new state are, in our author's opinion, the effectual, and the only effectual expedient, to produce sanctification. They are the very method which the eternal Spirit has ordained, for our bringing forth those *fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.*†

* It is not, by this expression, affirmed, or insinuated, that we are able to produce faith in ourselves, by any power of our own. This self-sufficiency the author has professedly and frequently disclaimed: asserting, that "the Spirit of God habitually disposes and inclines our hearts to a right performance of this most important act."—This manner of speaking is used, I imagine, for two reasons: To point out the first and chief work, which we are to be doing, incessantly and assiduously, till our Lord come: To remind us, that we must not expect to have faith wrought in us, by some fatality of supernatural operation, without any application or endeavor of our own; but that we must make it our diligent endeavor, and our daily business, to believe in Christ. We must *labor to enter into this rest, and show all diligence to attain to the full assurance of hope.*

† Phil. i. 11.

—Whereas, if there be any appearances of virtue, or any efforts of obedience which spring not from these motives and means of practice, Mr. Marshall treats them as “reprobate silver.” He cannot allow them the character of Gospel holiness.

This is the plan, and these are the leading sentiments, of the ensuing treatise. To establish or defend them, is not my aim. This is attempted, and I think executed, in the work itself. My aim is, only to exhibit the most distinguishing principles, in one short sketch, and clear point of view; that the reader may the more easily remember them, and by this key enter the more perfectly into the writer’s meaning.—Let him that is spiritual* judge; and reject or admit, as each tenet shall appear to correspond or disagree with the infallible Word. Only let candor, not rigor, fill the chair; and interpret an unguarded expression, or a seemingly inconsistent sentence, by the general tenor of the discourse.

We are not to expect much pathos of address, or any delicacy of composition. Here the Gospel diamond is set, not in gold, but in steel: not where it may display the most sprightly beam, or pour a flood of brilliancy; but where it may do the most signal service, and afford a fund of usefulness. Neither is this book so particularly calculated for careless, insensible sinners, as for those who are awakened into a solicitous attention to their everlasting interests; who are earnestly inquiring, with the Philippian jailer, *What shall I do to be saved?*† or passionately crying, in the language of the apostle, *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*‡ If there be any such, as no doubt there are many, in the Christian world, I would say with regard to them, as the Israelitish captive said concerning her illustrious but afflicted master, *Would God my master were with the prophet that is in Samaria: for he would recover him of his leprosy.*§ O that such persons were acquainted with the doctrines, and influenced by the directions, contained in this treatise! They would, under the divine blessing, recover them from their distress, and restore them to tranquillity; they would *comfort their hearts and thereby establish them in every good word and work.*||

But I am going to anticipate what the following extract

* 1 Cor. ii. 15.

¶ 2 Kings v. 3.

† Acts xvi. 30.

|| 2 Thess. ii. 17.

‡ Rom. vii. 24.

speaks. I shall therefore only add my hearty wishes, that you may meet with encouragement and success in the publication of this truly valuable piece. Since there is, in this instance, an evident connection between your private interest and the general good, I think you may promise yourself the approbation and acceptance of the public; as you will assuredly have all the support and assistance that can be given by,

Sir, your humble servant,

JAMES HERVEY.

Weston Favel, near Northampton,
Nov. 5, 1756.

RECOMMENDATION IN THERON AND ASPASIO.

“It is with great pleasure, and without any diffidence, that I refer my readers to Mr. Marshall’s treatise on Sanctification. Which I shall not recommend in the style of a critic, nor like a person of taste, but with all the simplicity of the weakest Christian; I mean, from *my own experience*. It has been made one of the most useful books to my own heart. I scarcely ever fail to receive spiritual consolation and strength from the perusal of it; and was I to be banished into some desolate island, possessed only of two books besides my Bible, this should be one of the two, perhaps the first that I would choose.

“Should any person, hitherto a stranger to the work, purchase it on this recommendation, I must desire to suggest one caution.—That he be not surprised, if, in the beginning, he meets with something new, and quite out of the common road; or, if surprised, that he would not be offended, but calmly and attentively proceed.—He will find the author’s design opening itself by degrees. He will discern more and more the propriety of his method. And what might, at the first view, appear like a stumbling-block, will prove to be a fair and ample avenue to the palace of truth, to the temple of holiness, and to the bowers of happiness.”



THE
GOSPEL·MYSTERY
OF
SANCTIFICATION.

DIRECTION I.

That we may acceptably perform the duties of holiness and righteousness required in the law, our first work is, to learn the powerful and effectual means whereby we may attain to so great an end.

EXPLICATION.

THIS direction may serve, instead of a preface, to prepare the understanding and attention of the reader for those that follow. And,

First, It acquainteth you with the great end for which all those means are designed, that are the principal subject to be here treated of. The scope of all is, to teach you how you may attain to that practice and manner of life which we call holiness, righteousness, or godliness, obedience, true religion; and which God requires of us in the law, particularly in the moral law, summed up in the ten commandments, and more briefly in those two great commandments of love to God and our neighbor, Matt. xxii. 27, 39; and more largely explained throughout the Holy Scriptures. My work is, to show how the duties of this law may

be done, when they are known ; therefore expect not that I should delay my intent, to help you to the knowledge of them, by any large exposition of them ; which is a work already performed in several catechisms and commentaries. Yet, that you may not miss the mark for want of discerning it, take notice, in few words, that the holiness which I would bring you to, is spiritual, Rom. vii. 14. It consists not only in external works of piety and charity, but in the holy thoughts, imaginations, and affections of the soul, and chiefly in love ; from whence all other good works must flow, or else they are not acceptable to God ; not only in refraining the execution of sinful lusts, but in longing and delighting to do the will of God, and in a cheerful obedience to God, without repining, fretting, grudging, at any duty, as if it were a grievous yoke and burden to you.

Take notice further, that the law, which is your mark, is exceeding broad, Ps. cxix. 96, and yet not the more easy to be hit ; because you must aim to hit it, in every duty of it, with a performance of equal breadth, or else you cannot hit it at all, James ii. 10. The Lord is not at all loved with that love that is due to him as Lord of all, if He be not loved with all our heart, spirit, and might. We are to love everything in Him, His justice, holiness, sovereign authority, all-seeing eye, and all His decrees, commands, judgments, and all His doings. We are to love Him, not only better than other things, but singly, as only good, the fountain of all goodness ; and to reject all fleshly and worldly enjoyments, even our own lives, as if we hated them, when they stand in competition with our enjoyment of Him, or our duty toward Him. We must love Him so as to yield ourselves wholly up to His constant service in all things, and to His disposal of us as our absolute Lord, whether it be for prosperity or adversity, life or death. And, for His sake, we are to love our neighbor, even all men, whether they be friends or foes to

us; and so do to them in all things, that concern their honor, life, chastity, worldly wealth, credit, and content, whatever we would that men should do to us in the like condition, Matt. vii. 12. This spiritual universal obedience is the great end, to the attainment whereof I am directing you. And that you may not reject my enterprise as impossible, observe, that the most I promise is no more than an acceptable performance of these duties of the law, such as our gracious, merciful God will certainly delight in, and be pleased with, during our state of imperfection in this world, and such as will end in perfection of holiness, and all happiness in the world to come.

Before I proceed further, stay your thoughts awhile in the contemplation of the great dignity and excellency of these duties of the law, that you may aim at the performance of them, as your end, with so high an esteem, as may cast an amiable lustre upon the ensuing discovery of the means. The principal duties of love to God above all, and to each other for His sake, from whence all the other duties flow, are so excellent, that I cannot imagine any more noble work for the holy angels in their glorious sphere. They are the chief works for which we were at first framed in the image of God, engraven upon man in the first creation, and for which that beautiful image is renewed upon us in our new creation and sanctification by Jesus Christ, and shall be perfected in our glorification. They are works which depend not merely on the sovereignty of the will of God, to be commanded or forbidden, or left indifferent, or changed, or abolished, at His pleasure, as other works that belong either to the judicial or ceremonial law, or to the means of salvation prescribed by the Gospel; but they are, in their own nature, holy, just, and good, Rom. vii. 12, and meet for us to perform, because of our natural relation to our Creator and fellow-creatures; so that they have an inseparable dependence upon the holiness of the will of God, and

an indispensable establishment thereby. They are works sufficient to render the performers holy in all manner of conversation, by the fruits which they bring forth, if no other duties had ever been commanded; and by which, the performance of all other duties is sufficiently established as soon as they are commanded; and without which, there can be no holiness of heart and life imagined; and to which, it was one great honor of Mosaical, and is now of Evangelical ordinances, to be subservient for the performance of them, as means which shall cease when their end, this never-failing charity, is perfectly attained, 1 Cor. xiii. They are duties which we were naturally obliged to, by that reason and understanding, which God gave to man at his first creation, to discern what was just and meet for him to do, and to which even heathens are still obliged by the light of nature, without any written law, or supernatural revelation, Rom. ii. 14, 15. Therefore they are called natural religion; and the law that requires them, is called the natural law, and also the moral law; because the manners of all men, infidels as well as Christians, ought to be conformed to it, (and, if they had been fully conformable, they would not have come short of eternal happiness, Matt. v. 19, Luke x. 27, 28;) under the penalty of the wrath of God for the violation of it. This is the true morality which God approves of, consisting in a conformity of all our actions to the moral law. And, if those who, in these days, contend so highly for morality, understand no other than this, I dare join with them in asserting, that the best morally honest man is the greatest saint; and that morality is the principal part of true religion, and the test of all other parts, without which faith is dead, and all other religious performances are a vain show, and mere hypocrisy: for the faithful and true Witness has testified, concerning the two great moral commandments of love to God, and our neighbor, that there is no other commandment

greater than these, and that on them hang all the law and the prophets, Matt. xxii. 36, 38, 39, 40. Mark xii. 31.

The second thing contained in this introductory direction, is the necessity of learning the powerful and effectual means, whereby this great and excellent end may be accomplished, and of making this the first work to be done, before we can expect success in any attempt for the attainment of it.

This is a very needful premonition: because many are apt to skip over the lesson concerning the means (that will fill up this whole treatise) as superfluous and useless. When once they know the nature and excellency of the duties of the law, they account nothing wanting but diligent performance; and they rush blindly upon immediate practice, making more haste than good speed. They are quick in promising, Exod. xix. 8—*all that the Lord hath spoken, we will do*—without sitting down, and counting the cost. They look upon holiness as only the means of an end, eternal salvation; not as an end itself, requiring any great means for attaining the practice of it. The inquiry of most, when they begin to have a sense of religion, is, *What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* Matt. xix. 16, not, How shall I be enabled to do anything that is good? Yea, many who are accounted powerful preachers, spend all their zeal in earnestly pressing the immediate practice of the law, without any discovery of the effectual means of performance; as if the works of righteousness were like those servile employments that need no skill and artifice at all, but industry and activity. That you may not stumble at the threshold of a religious life by this common oversight, I shall endeavor to make you sensible, that it is not enough for you to know the matter and reason of your duty, but that you are also to learn the powerful and effectual means of performance, before you can successfully apply yourselves to immediate practice.

And, for this end, I shall lay before you the considerations following.

First, We are all, by nature, void of all strength and ability to perform acceptably that holiness and righteousness which the law requires, and are dead in trespasses and sins, and children of wrath, by the sin of our first father Adam, as the Scripture witnesses, Rom. v. 12, 15, 18, 19. Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3. Rom. viii. 7, 8. This doctrine of original sin, which Protestants generally profess, is a firm basis and groundwork to the assertion now to be proved, and to many other assertions in this whole discourse. If we believe it to be true, we cannot rationally encourage ourselves to attempt a holy practice, until we are acquainted with some powerful and effectual means to enable us for it. While man continued upright, in the image of God, as he was at first created, Eccl. vii. 19, Gen. i. 27, he could do the will of God sincerely as soon as he knew it; but, when he was fallen, he was quickly afraid, because of his nakedness; but could not help it at all, until God discovered to him the means of restoration, Gen. iii. 10, 15. Say to a strong healthy servant, Go, and he goeth; come, and he cometh; do this, and he doeth it; but a bed-ridden servant must know first how he may be enabled. No doubt the fallen angels know the necessity of holiness, and tremble at the guilt of their sin; but they know of no means for them to attain to holiness effectually, and so continue still in their wickedness. It was in vain for Samson to say, *I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself*, when he had sinned away his strength, Judges xvi. 20. Men show themselves strangely forgetful or hypocritical, in professing original sin in their prayers, catechisms, and confessions of faith; and yet urging upon themselves and others the practice of the law, without the consideration of any strengthening, enlivening means; as if there were no want of ability, but only of activity.

Secondly, Those that doubt of, or deny the doctrine

of original sin, may all of them know concerning themselves, (if their conscience be not blind,) that the exact justice of God is against them, and they are under the curse of God, and sentence of death, for their actual sins, if God should enter into judgment with them, Rom. i. 32, ii. 2, and iii. 9, Gal. iii. 10. Is it possible for a man who knows this to be his case, and has not learned any means of getting out of it, to practise the law immediately, to love God and everything in Him, His justice, holiness, power, as well as His mercy, and to yield himself willingly to the disposal of God, though God should inflict sudden death upon him? Is there no skill or artifice at all required in this case, to encourage the fainting soul to the practice of universal obedience?

Thirdly, Though heathens might know much of the work of the law, by the common light of natural reason and understanding, Rom. ii. 14, yet the effectual means of performance cannot be discovered by that light, and therefore are to be wholly learned by the teaching of supernatural revelation. For what is our natural light, but some sparks and glimmerings of that which was in Adam before the fall? and, even then, in its brightest meridian, it was not sufficient to direct Adam how to recover ability to walk holily, if once he should lose it by sin; nor to assure him beforehand, that God would vouchsafe to him any means of recovery. God had set nothing but death before his eyes in case of transgression, Gen. ii. 17; and therefore he hid himself from God, when the shame of his nakedness appeared, as expecting no favor from Him. We are like sheep gone astray, and know not which way to return, until we hear the shepherd's voice. Can these dry bones live to God in holiness? O Lord, Thou knowest, and we cannot know it, except we learn it of Thee.

Fourthly, Sanctification, whereby our hearts and lives are conformed to the law, is a grace of God com-

municated to us by means, as well as justification ; and by means of teaching, and learning something that we cannot see without the Word, Acts xxvi. 17, 18. There are several things pertaining to life and godliness, that are given through knowledge, 2 Pet. i. 2, 3. There is a form of doctrine made use of by God, to make people free from sin, and servants of righteousness, Rom. vi. 17, 18. And there are several pieces of the whole armor of God necessary to be known and put on, that we may stand against sin and Satan in the evil day, Eph. vi. 13. Shall we slight and overlook the way of sanctification, when the learning the way of justification has been accounted worth so many elaborate treatises ?

Fifthly, God has given in the Holy Scriptures, by His inspiration, plentiful instruction in righteousness, *that we may be thoroughly furnished for every good work*, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17 ; especially since *the day-spring from on high hath visited us*, by the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, *to guide our feet in the way of peace*, Luke i. 78, 79. If God condescend to us so very low, to teach us this way in the Scriptures, and by Christ, it must needs be greatly necessary for us, to sit down at His feet, and learn it. —

Sixthly, The way of attaining to godliness is so far from being known without learning out of the Holy Scriptures, that, when it is here plainly revealed, we cannot learn it so easily as the duties of the law ; which are known in part by the light of nature, and therefore the more easily assented to. It is the way whereby the dead are brought to live unto God ; and therefore doubtless it is far above all the thoughts and conjectures of human wisdom. It is the way to salvation, wherein God will *destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent*, by discovering things by His Spirit that *the natural man receiveth not ; for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually dis-*

cerned, 1 Cor. i. 19, 31, and ii. 14. *Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. The learning of it requires double work; because we must unlearn many of our former deeply-rooted notions, and become fools, that we may be wise. We must pray earnestly to the Lord, to teach us, as well as search the Scriptures that we may get this knowledge. "O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes! Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end," Ps. cxix. 5, 33. "Teach me to do thy will," Ps. cxliii. 10. "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God," 2 Thess. iii. 5. Surely these saints did not so much want teaching and direction concerning the duties of the law to be done, as concerning the way and means whereby they might do them.

Seventhly, The certain knowledge of these powerful and effectual means, is of the greatest importance and necessity for our establishment in the true faith, and avoiding errors contrary thereto; for we cannot rationally doubt that the moral duties of love to God and our neighbor, are absolutely necessary to true religion, so that it cannot subsist without them. And, from this principle we may firmly conclude, that nothing repugnant to the practice of these holy duties, ought to be received as a point of faith delivered to us by the most holy God; and that whatsoever is truly necessary, powerful, and effectual to bring us to the practice of them, ought to be believed as proceeding from God, because it has the image of His holiness and righteousness engraven upon it. This is a sure test and touchstone, which those who are seriously religious will use, to try spirits and their doctrines, whether they be of God, or not; and they cannot rationally approve any doctrine as religious, that is not according to godliness, 1 Tim. vi. 3. By this touchstone Christ proves His doctrine to be of God, because therein He seeks the glory of God, John vii. 17, 18. And He teaches us

to know false prophets by their fruits, Matt. vii. 15, 16, wherein the fruits which their doctrine tends unto, are especially to be considered. Hence it appears, that, until we know what are the effectual means of holiness, and what not, we want a necessary touchstone of divine truth, and may be easily deceived by false doctrine, or brought to live in mere suspense concerning the truth of any religion, like the seekers. And, if you mistake, and think those means to be effectual that are not, and those that are effectual to be weak, or of a contrary effect, your error in this will be a false touchstone to try other doctrines, whereby you will readily approve of errors, and refuse the truth; which has been a pernicious occasion of many errors in religion in late days. Get but a true touchstone, by learning this lesson, and you will be able to try the various doctrines of Protestants, Papists, Arminians, Socinians, Antinomians, Quakers; and to discover the truth, and cleave to it, with much satisfaction to your judgment, amongst all the janglings and controversies of these times. Hereby you may discover whether the Protestant religion established among us, have in it any sinews of Antinomianism; whether it be guilty of any insufferable defect in practical principles, and deserves to be altered, and turned almost upside down, with new doctrines and methods; as some learned men in late times have judged by their touchstones.

Eighthly, It is also of great importance and necessity for our establishment in holy practice; for we cannot apply ourselves to the practice of holiness, with hope of success, except we have some faith concerning the divine assistance; which we have no ground to expect, if we use not such means as God has appointed to work by. "God meeteth them that remember Him in His own ways," Isa. lxiv. 5; and makes a breach upon them that seek Him not after the due order, 1 Chron. xv. 13. He has chosen and ordained such means of sanctification and salvation as are for His own glory,

and those only He blesses to us ; and he crowns no man that strives, except he *strive lawfully*, 2 Tim. ii. 5. Experience shows plentifully, both of heathens and Christians, how pernicious ignorance, or mistaking of those effectual means, is to a holy practice. The heathens generally fell short of an acceptable performance of those duties of the law which they knew, because of their ignorance in this point. (1.) Many Christians content themselves with external performances, because they never knew how they might attain to spiritual service. (2.) And many reject the way of holiness as austere and unpleasant, because they know not how to cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye, without intolerable pain ; whereas, they would find *the ways of wisdom*, (if they knew them) *to be ways of pleasantness, and all her paths to be peace*, Prov. iii. 17. This occasions the putting off repentance from time to time as an uncouth thing. (3.) Many others set upon the practice of holiness with a fervent zeal, and run very fast ; but tread not a step in the right way ; and, finding themselves frequently disappointed and overcome by their lusts, they at last give over the work, and turn to wallow again in the mire : which has occasioned several treatises, to show how far a reprobate may go in the way of religion ; whereby many weak saints are discouraged, accounting that these reprobates have gone further than themselves ; whereas most of them never knew the right way, nor trod one step aright in it ; for, *few there be that find it*, Matt. vii. 14. (4.) Some of those ignorant zealots do in humanly macerate their bodies with fasting and other austerities, to kill their lusts ; and, when they see their lusts are still too hard for them, they fall into despair, and are driven, by horror of conscience, to make away with themselves wickedly, to the scandal of religion. Peradventure God may bless my discovery of the powerful means of holiness so far, as to save some one or other from killing himself. And such a

fruit as this would countervail my labor; though I hope God will enlarge the hearts of many by it, to run with great cheerfulness, joy, and thanksgiving, in the ways of His commandments.

DIRECTION II.

Several endowments and qualifications are necessary to enable us for the immediate practice of the law. Particularly, we must have an inclination and propensity of our hearts thereunto; and therefore we must be well persuaded of our reconciliation with God, and of our future enjoyment of the everlasting heavenly happiness, and of sufficient strength both to will and perform all duties acceptably, until we come to the enjoyment of that happiness.

EXPLICATION.

THOSE means that are next to the attainment of the great end aimed at, are first to be discovered, that we may learn how to get them by other means, expressed in the following directions. Therefore I have named here several qualifications and endowments that are necessary to make up that holy frame and state of the soul, whereby it is furnished and enabled to practice the law immediately; and that not only in the beginning, but in the continuation of that practice. And therefore, note diligently that these endowments must continue in us during the present life, or else our ability for a holy life will be lost; and they must be *before* practice; not in any distance of time, but only as the cause is before the effect. I do not say, that I have named particularly all such necessary qualifications; but this much I dare say, that he who gains these, may, by the same means, gain any other that should

be ranked with them : and this is a matter worthy of our serious consideration ; for few understand that any special endowments are required to furnish us for a holy practice, more than for other voluntary actions. The first Adam had excellent endowments bestowed upon him for a holy practice, when he was first created according to the image of God ; and the second Adam had endowments more excellent, to enable him for a harder task of obedience. And, seeing obedience is grown more difficult by reason of the opposition and temptations that it meets with since the fall of Adam, we that are to be imitators of Christ, have need of very choice endowments, as Christ had ; at least as good or something better than Adam had at first, as our work is harder than his. *What king going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able, with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand ?* And shall we dare to rush into battle against all the powers of darkness, all worldly terrors and allurements, and our own inbred domineering corruptions, without considering whether we have sufficient spiritual furniture to stand in the evil day ? Yet many content themselves with such an ability to will and do their duty, as they would have to be given to men universally ; whereby they are no better enabled for the spiritual battle, than the generality of the world, that lie vanquished under the wicked one ; and therefore their standing is not at all secured by it. It is a hard matter to find what this universal ability is, that so many contend so earnestly for, of what it consisteth, by what means it is conveyed to us, and maintained.

Bodily agility has spirits, nerves, ligaments, bones to subsist by ; but this spiritual, universal ability seems to be some occult quality, that no sufficient account can be given how it is conveyed, or of what it is constituted. That none may deceive themselves, and misarry in their enterprises for holiness, by depending on

such a weak, occult quality, I have here showed FOUR ENDOWMENTS, of which a true ability for the practice of holiness must necessarily be constituted, and by which it must subsist and be maintained : I intend to show afterwards, by what means they are given to us, and whether the inclination or propensity here mentioned be perfect or imperfect. And they are of such a mysterious nature, that some who own the necessity of endowments to frame them for holiness, are prone to think that less than these will serve ; and that some of these frame us rather for licentiousness than holiness, as they are here placed before any actual performance of the moral law ; and that some things contrary to them would put us into a better frame for holiness. Against all such surmises, I shall endeavor such a demonstration of these endowments particularly, as may gain the assent of right reason ; insisting on them in the same order wherein I have placed them in the direction.

In the *first* place, I assert, that an inclination and propensity of heart to the duties of the law, is necessary to frame and enable us for the immediate practice of them. And I mean not such a blind propensity as inanimate creatures and brutes have to their natural operations, but such a one as is meet for intelligent creatures, whereby they are, by the guidance of reason, prone and bent to approve and choose their duty, and averse to the practice of sin. And therefore I have intimated, that the three other endowments mentioned in the direction, are subservient to this as the chief of all, which is sufficient to make it a rational propensity. This is contrary to those, who, out of zeal for obedience, but not according to knowledge, contend so earnestly for free will as a necessary and sufficient endowment to enable us to perform our duty, when once we are convinced of it, and of our obligation to it ; and who extol this endowment as the great benefit that

universal redemption has blessed all mankind with; though they consider this free will without any actual inclination to good; yea, they cannot but acknowledge, that, in most of mankind that have it, it is encumbered with an actual bent and propensity of the heart altogether to evil. Such a free will as this is, can never free us from slavery to sin and Satan, and fit us for the practice of the law; and therefore is not worthy the pains of those that contend so hotly for it. Neither is the will so free as is necessary for the practice of holiness, until it be endued with an inclination and propensity thereunto; as may appear by the following arguments.

First, The duties of the law are of such a nature, that they cannot possibly be performed while there is wholly an aversion or mere indifference of the heart to the performance of them, and no good inclination and propensity toward the practice of them: because the chief of all the commandments is, to love the Lord with our whole heart, might, and soul; to love everything that is in Him, to love His will, and all His ways, and to like them as good. And all duties must be influenced, in their performance, by this love: we must delight to do the will of God; it must be sweeter to us than the honey or honey-comb, Ps. xl. 8, Job xxiii. 12, Ps. lxiii. 1, cxix. 20, and xix. 10. And this love, liking, delight, longing, thirsting, sweet relishing, must be continued to the end; and the first indeliberate motion of lust must be regulated by love to God and our neighbor; and sin must be lusted against, Gal. v. 17, and abhorred, Ps. xxxvi. 4. If it were true obedience, (as some would have it,) to love our duty only as a market man loves foul ways to the market, or as a sick man loves an unpleasant medicinal potion, or as a captive slave loves his hard work for fear of a greater evil; then it might be performed with averse-ness, or want of inclination; but we must love it, as the market man gain, as the sick man health, as pleasant

meat and drink, as the captive liberty. Doubtless there can be no power in the will for this kind of service, without an agreeableness of our inclination to the will of God, a heart according to His own heart, an aversion of our hearts from sin, and a kind of antipathy against sin: for we know the proverb, "Like loveth like." There must be an agreeableness in the person or thing beloved, to the disposition of the lover. Love to God must flow from *a pure heart*, 1 Tim. i. 5, a heart cleansed from evil propensities and inclinations. And reason will tell us, that the first motions of lust, which fall not under our choice and deliberation, cannot be avoided without a fixed propensity of the heart to holiness.

Secondly, The image of God (wherein God according to his infinite wisdom, judged it meet to frame the first Adam in righteousness, and true holiness, and uprightness, Gen. i. 27, Eph. iv. 24, Eccles. vii. 29,) consisted in an actual bent and propensity of heart to the practice of holiness; not in a mere power of will to choose good or evil: for this, in itself, is neither holy nor unholy, but only a ground work, on which either the image of God, or of Satan, may be drawn: nor in an indifference of propensity to the choice of sin or duty; for this is a wicked disposition in an intelligent creature, that knows his duty, and fits us only to halt between God and Baal. God set Adam's soul at first wholly in a right bent and inclination, though Adam might act contrary to it, if he would; as we may be under inclinations: and it is easy to fail of our duty, prevailed upon to do some things contrary to our nature though great preparation and furniture be required for the performance of it. The second Adam also, the Lord Jesus Christ, was born a holy thing, Luke i. 35, with a holy disposition of His soul, and propensity to goodness. And can we reasonably hope to arise to the life of holiness from which the first Adam fell, or to be imitators of Christ, since duty is made so difficult

by the fall, if we be not renewed in a measure according to the same image of God, and enabled with such a propensity and inclination?

Thirdly, Original corruption (whereby we are dead to God and godliness from the birth, and made willing slaves to the performance of all actual sins, until the Son of God make us free,) consists in a propensity and inclination of the heart to sin, and averseness to holiness. Without this propensity to sin, what can that *law of sin in our members* be, that *warreth against the law of our mind, and leadeth us captive to the service of sin*? Rom. vii. 23. What is that poison in us, for which men may be called *serpents, vipers*? What is that spirit of whoredoms in men, by reason of which they will not frame their doings to turn to God? Hos. v. 4. How is the tree first corrupt, and then its fruit corrupt? Matt. xii. 33. How can man be said to be abominable and filthy, that drinketh iniquity like water? Job xv. 16. How should the mind of the flesh be continual enmity to the law of God? Rom. viii. 7. I know there is also a blindness of understanding, and other things, belonging to original corruption, which conduce to this evil propensity of the will; but yet this propensity itself is the great evil, the indwelling sin which produces all actual sins; and must of necessity be removed or restrained, by restoring that contrary inclination, wherein the image of God consists; or else we shall be backward and reprobate to every good work, and whatever freedom the will has, it shall be employed only in the service of sin.

Fourthly, God restores His people to holiness, by giving to them *a new heart, and a new spirit, and taking away the heart of stone out of their flesh, and giving them a heart of flesh*, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27; and He circumciseth their heart to love Him with their whole heart and soul. And He requires, that we should be transformed *in the renewing of our mind, that we may prove what is His acceptable will*, Rom. xii. 2; and

David prays, for the same end, *that God would create in him a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within him*, Psalm li. 10. If any one can judge, that this new, clean, circumcised heart, this heart of flesh, this new, right spirit, is such a one as has no actual inclination and propensity to good, but only a power to choose good or evil, undeservedly called free will, with a present inclination to evil, or an indifference of propensity to both contraries, it will not be worth my labor to convince such a judgment: only let him consider, whether David could account such a heart to be clean and right, when he prayed, Ps. cxix. 36, *Incline mine heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.*

The SECOND ENDOWMENT necessary to enable us for the immediate practice of holiness, and concurring with the two others that follow, to work in us a rational propensity to this practice, is, that we be well persuaded of our reconciliation with God. We must reckon, that the breach of amity which sin has made between God and us, is made up by a firm reconciliation to His love and favor. And herein I include the great benefit of justification, as the means whereby we are reconciled to God, which is described in Scripture, either by forgiving our sins, or by the imputation of righteousness to us, Rom. iv. 5, 6, 7; because both are contained in one and the same justifying act; as one act of illumination comprehends expulsion of darkness, and introduction of light; one act of repentance contains mortification of sin, and vivification to righteousness; and every motion from anything to its contrary, is but one and the same, though it may be expressed by divers names, with respect to either of the two contrary terms, the one of which is abolished, the other introduced by it. This is a great mystery, (contrary to the apprehensions, not only of the vulgar, but of some learned divines,) that we must be reconciled to God, and justified by the remission of our sins, and imputa-

tion of righteousness, before any sincere obedience to the law, that we may be enabled for the practice of it. They account, that this doctrine tends to the subversion of a holy practice, and is a great pillar of Antinomianism; and that the only way to establish sincere obedience, is to make it rather a condition to be performed before our actual justification, and reconciliation with God. Therefore some late divines have thought fit to bring the doctrine of former Protestants concerning justification to their anvil, and to hammer it into another form, that it might be more free from Antinomianism, and effectual to secure a holy practice. But their labor is vain and pernicious, tending to Antinomian profaneness, or painted hypocrisy at best; neither can the true practice of holiness be secure, except the persuasion of our justification, and reconciliation with God, be first obtained without works of the law, that we may be enabled thereby to do them; as I shall now prove by several arguments: intending also to show in the following directions, that such a persuasion of the love of God as God giveth to His people, tends only to holiness, though a mispersuasion of it be in many an occasion of licentiousness.

First, When the first Adam was framed for the practice of holiness at his creation, he was highly in the favor of God, and had no sin imputed to him, and he was accounted righteous in the sight of God, according to his present state; because he was made up-right according to God's image. And there is no reason to doubt, that these qualifications were his advantage for a holy practice, and the wisdom of God judged them good for that end; and, as soon as he lost them, he became dead in sin. The second Adam also in our nature was the beloved of the Father, accounted righteous in the sight of God, without the imputation of any sin to Him, except what His office was to bear on the behalf of others. And can we reasonably expect to be imitators of Christ, by performing

more difficult obedience than the first Adam s was before the fall, except the like advantages be given to us, by reconciliation, and remission of sins, and the imputation of a righteousness given by God to us, when we have none of our own?

Secondly, Those that know their natural deadness under the power of sin and Satan, are fully convinced, that if God leave them to their own hearts, they can do nothing but sin; and that they can do no good work, except it please God, of His great love and mercy, to work it in them, John viii. 36, Phil. ii. 13, Rom. viii. 7, 8. Therefore, that they may be encouraged and rationally inclined to holiness, they must hope that God will work savingly in them. Now, I leave it to considerate men to judge whether such a hope can be well grounded, without a good persuasion of such a reconciliation and saving love of God to us, as depends not upon any precedent goodness of our works, but is a cause sufficient to produce them effectually in us? Yea, we know further, (if we know ourselves sufficiently,) that our death in sin proceeded from the guilt of the first sin of Adam, and the sentence denounced against it, Gen. ii. 17, and that it is still maintained in us by the guilt of sin, and the curse of the law; and that spiritual life will never be given us, to free us from that dominion, except this guilt and curse be removed from us; which is done by actual justification, Gal. iii. 13, 14, Rom. vi. 14. And this is sufficient to make us despair of living to God in holiness, while we apprehend ourselves to be under the curse and wrath of God, by reason of our transgressions and sins lying upon us, Ezek. xxxiii. 10.

Thirdly, The nature of the duties of the law is such, as requires an apprehension of our reconciliation with God, and His hearty love and favor towards us for the doing of them. The great duty is love to God with our whole heart; and not such a contemplative love as philosophers may have to the objects of science, which

they are concerned in no further, than to please their fancies in the knowledge of them ; but a practical love, whereby we are willing that God should be absolute Lord and governor over us and all the world, to dispose of us and all others according to His will, as to our temporal and everlasting condition, and that He should be the only portion and happiness of all those that are happy ; a love whereby we like everything in Him as He is our Lord ; His justice as well as any other attribute, without wishing or desiring that He were better than He is ; and whereby we desire that His will may be done upon us, and all others, whether for prosperity or adversity, life or death ; and whereby we can heartily praise Him for all things, and delight in our obedience to Him, in doing His will, though we suffer that which is ever so grievous to us, even present death.

Consider these things well, and you may easily perceive, that our spirits are not in a fit frame for the doing of them, while we apprehend ourselves under the curse and wrath of God, or while we are under prevailing suspicions that God will prove an enemy to us at last. Slavish fear may extort some slavish, hypocritical performances from us, such as that of Pharaoh in letting the Israelites go, sore against his will ; but the duty of love cannot be extorted and forced by fear, but it must be won and sweetly allured by an apprehension of God's love and goodness towards us ; as that eminent, loving, and beloved disciple testifies, 1 John iv. 18, 19. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment : he that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love Him, because He first loved us." Observe here, that we cannot be beforehand with God in loving Him, before we apprehend His love to us. And consult your own experience, if you have any true love to God, whether it were not wrought in you by a sense of God's love first towards you ? All the goodness and excellency

of God cannot render Him an amiable object to us, except we apprehend Him an agreeable good to us. I question not but the devils know the excellency of God's nature, as well as our greatest metaphysical speculators; and this only fills them the more with tormenting horror and trembling, that is contrary to love, James ii. 19. The greater God's excellency and perfection is, the greater evil He is to us, if He hate us and curse us. And therefore the principle of self-preservation, deeply rooted in our natures, hinders us from loving that which we apprehend as our destruction. If a man be an enemy to us, we can love him for the sake of our loving, reconciled God, because His love will make man's hatred to work for our good; but if God himself be our enemy, for whose sake can we love Him? Who is there that can free us from the evil of His enmity, and turn it to our advantage until He be pleased to reconcile Himself to us?

Fourthly, Our conscience must of necessity be first purged from dead works, that we may serve the living God. And this is done by actual remission of sin, procured by the blood of Christ, and manifested to our consciences; as appeared by Christ's dying for this end, Heb. ix. 14, 15, and x. 1, 2, 4, 14, 17, 22. That conscience whereby we judge ourselves to be under the guilt of sin and the wrath of God is accounted an evil conscience in Scripture, though it perform its office truly; because it is caused by the evil of sin, and will itself be a cause of our committing more sin, until it can judge us to be justified from all sin, and received into the favor of God. Love, which is the end of the law, must proceed from a good conscience, as well as from any other cleanness of heart, 1 Tim. i. 5. David's mouth could not be opened to show forth the praise of God, until he was delivered from blood-guiltiness, Ps. li. 14, 15. This evil, guilty conscience, whereby we judge that God is our enemy, and that His justice is against us to our everlasting condemnation, by reason

of our sins, strongly maintains and increases the dominion of sin and Satan in us, and works most mischievous effects in the soul against godliness, even to bring the soul to hate God, and to wish there were no God, no heaven, no hell, so we might escape the punishment due to us. It so disaffects people toward God, that they cannot endure to think, or speak, or hear of Him and His law ; but strive rather to put Him out of their minds by fleshly pleasures and worldly employments. And thus they are alienated from all true religion ; only, blinding it, and stopping the mouth of it. It produces zeal in many outside religious performances ; and also false religion, idolatry, and the most inhuman superstitions in the world. I have often considered, by what manner of working any sin could effectually destroy the whole image of God in the first Adam ; and I conclude, it was by working first an evil, guilty conscience in him, whereby he judged that the just God was against him, and cursed him for that one sin. And this was enough to work a shameful nakedness by disorderly lusts, a turning his love wholly from God to the creature, and 'a desire to be hidden from the presence of God, Gen. iii. 8, 10, which was a total destruction of the image of God's holiness. And we have cause to judge, that from the same cause proceeds the continual malice, rancor, rage, and blasphemy of the devil, and many notorious wicked men, against God and godliness. Some may think Job uncharitable, in suspecting, not merely that his sons had sinned, but that they had been so abominably wicked as to curse God in their hearts, Job i. 5, but Job well understood, that if the guilt of any ordinary sin lie upon the conscience, it will make the soul to wish secretly, that God was not, or that He were not so just a judge ; which is a secret cursing of God, that cannot be avoided, until our consciences be purged from the guilt of sin, by the offering of Christ for us ; which was then figured out by the burnt-offerings of Job for his sons.

Fifthly, God has abundantly discovered to us, in His Word, that His method in bringing men from sin to holiness of life, is, first to make them know that He loves them, and that their sins are blotted out. When He gave the ten commandments on Mount Sinai, He first discovered Himself to be their God, that had given them a sure pledge of His salvation, by their delivery from Egypt, in the preface, Exod. xx. 2. And during all the time of the Old Testament, God was pleased to make the entrance into religion to be by circumcision, which was not only a sign but also a seal of the righteousness of faith, whereby God justifies people, while they are considered as ungodly, Rom. iv. 11, 15. And this seal was administered to children eight days old, before they could perform any condition of sincere obedience, for their justification, that their furniture for a holy practice might be ready beforehand. Furthermore, in the time of the Old Testament, God appointed divers washings, and the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, to prepare and sanctify them for other parts of His worship in His tabernacle and temple; to figure out His purging their consciences from dead works by the blood of Christ, that they might serve the living God, Heb. ix. 10, 13, 14, 22. This, I say, was then figurative sanctification, as the word sanctification is taken in a large sense, comprehending all things that prepare us for the service of God, chiefly the remission of sin, Heb. x. 10, 14, 18. Though if it be taken in a strict sense, respecting only our conformity to the law, it must necessarily be placed after justification, according to the usual method of Protestant divines. God also reminded them of the necessity of purging away their guilt first, that their service might be acceptable, by commanding them to offer the sin-offering before the burnt-offering, Lev. v. 8, and xvi. 3, 11. And, lest the guilt of their sins should pollute the service of God, notwithstanding all their particular expiations, God was

pleased to appoint a general atonement for all their sins one day every year, wherein the scapegoat was "to bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited," Lev. xvi. 22, 34. Under the New Testament, God uses the same method, in loving us first, and washing us from our sins by the blood of Christ, that He may make us priests, to offer the sacrifices of praise and all good works to God, even the Father. He enters us into His service, by washing away our sins in baptism: He feeds and strengthens us for His service by remission of sins, given to us in the blood of Christ at the Lord's Supper: He exhorts us to obey Him, because He has already loved us, and our sins are already pardoned. "Forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children: and walk in love, as Christ hath loved us," Eph. iv. 32, and v. 1, 2. "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," 1 John ii. 12, 15. I might quote abundance of texts of the same nature. We may clearly see by all this, that God has accounted it a matter of great importance, and has condescended to take wonderful care in providing plentiful means, both under the Old and New Testament, that His people might be first cleansed from guilt and reconciled to Himself, to fit them for the acceptable practice of holiness. Away, then, with all the contrary methods of the new divinity.

The THIRD ENDOWMENT necessary to enable us for the practice of holiness, without which a persuasion of our reconciliation with God would be of little efficacy to work in us a rational propensity to it, is, that we be persuaded of our future enjoyment of the everlasting heavenly happiness. This must precede our holy practice, as a cause disposing and alluring us to it. This assertion has several sorts of adversaries to oppose it.

Some account, that a persuasion of our own future happiness, before we have persevered in sincere obedience, tends to licentiousness ; and that the way to do good works, is rather to make them a condition necessary for the procuring of this persuasion. Others condemn all works that we are allured or stirred up to by the future enjoyment of the heavenly happiness, as legal, mercenary, flowing from self-love, and not from any pure love to God ; and they figure out sincere godliness by a man bearing fire in one hand, to burn up heaven, and water in the other to quench hell ; intimating that the true service of God must not proceed at all from hope of reward, or fear of punishment, but only from love. To establish the truth asserted, against the errors that are so contrary to it, and to each other, I shall propose the ensuing considerations.

First, The nature of the duties of the law is such, that they cannot be sincerely and universally practised without this endowment. That this endowment must be present in us, is sufficiently proved already, by all that I have said concerning the necessity of the persuasion of our firm reconciliation with God by our justification, to prepare us for this practice ; because that includes a persuasion of this future-happiness, or else it is of little value. All that I have to add here, is, that sincere obedience cannot rationally subsist, except it be allured, encouraged, and supported by this persuasion. Let me therefore suppose a Sadducee believing no happiness after this life, and put the question, Can such a one love God with his whole heart, might, and soul ? Will he not think it reasonable, rather to lessen and moderate his love towards God, lest he should be overmuch troubled to part with Him by death ? We account it most reasonable to sit loose in our affections from things that we must part with. Can such a one be satisfied with the enjoyment of God as his happiness ? Will he not rather account, that the enjoyment of God, and all religious duties, are vanities,

as well as other things ; because in a little time we shall have no more benefit by them, than if they had never been ? How can such a one be willing to lay down his life for the sake of God, when, by his death, he must part with God, as well as with other things ? How can he willingly choose affliction, rather than sin, when he shall be more miserable in this life for it, and not at all happy hereafter ? I grant, if affliction come unavoidably upon such a person, he may reasonably judge, that patience is better for him than impatience ; but it will displease him, that he is forced to the use of such a virtue ; and he will be prone to fret and murmur at his Creator, and to wish he had never been, rather than to endure such miseries, and to be comforted only with vain, transitory enjoyments. I think I have said enough to show how unfurnished such a man is for holiness. And he that will burn up heaven, and quench hell, that he may serve God out of love, thereby leaves himself little better furnished than the Sadducee. The one denies them, the other will not have them at all to be considered in this case.

Secondly, The sure hope of the glory of heaven, is made use of ordinarily by God, since the fall of Adam, as an encouragement to the practice of holiness ; as the Scripture abundantly shows. Christ, the great pattern of holiness, “for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame,” Heb. xii. 2. And though I cannot say, that the first Adam had such a sure hope to preserve him in innocence ; yet he had instead of it, the present possession of an earthly paradise, and a happy estate in it ; which he knew would last, if he continued in holiness, or be changed into a better happiness. The apostles did not faint under affliction, because they knew that it wrought for them “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,” 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17. The believing Hebrews “took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an

enduring substance," Heb. x. 34. The Apostle Paul accounts all his sufferings unprofitable, were it not for a glorious resurrection; and that Christians would be of all men most miserable, and that the doctrine of the Epicures were rather to be chosen, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die." And he exhorts the Corinthians to be "abundant in the work of the Lord, knowing that their labor shall not be in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 58. As worldly hope keeps the world at work in their various employments, so God gives His people the hope of His glory, to keep them close to His service, Heb. vi. 11, 12, 1 John iii. 3. And it is such a sure hope as shall never make them ashamed, Rom. v. 5. Those that think it below the excellency of their love, to work from a hope of the heavenly reward, thereby advance their love beyond the love of the apostles and primitive saints, and even of Christ himself.

Thirdly, This persuasion of our future enjoyment of everlasting happiness cannot tend to licentiousness, if we understand well, that perfect holiness is a necessary part of that happiness, and that though we have a title to that happiness by free justification and adoption, yet we must go to the possession of it in a way of holiness, 1 John iii. 1, 2, 3. Neither is it legal or mercenary, to be moved by this persuasion; seeing the persuasion itself is not gotten by the works of the law, but by free grace through faith, Gal. v. 5. And, if it be a working from self-love; yet, for certain, it is not that carnal self-love which the Scripture condemns as the mother of sinfulness, 2 Tim. iii. 2; but a holy self-love, inclining us to prefer God above the flesh and the world, such as God directs us unto, when He exhorts us to save ourselves, Acts ii. 40, 1 Tim. iv. 16. And it is so far from being contrary to the pure love of God, that it brings us to love God more purely and entirely. The more good and beneficial we apprehend God to us to all eternity, doubtless the more lovely God will be

to us, and our affections will be the more inflamed towards Him. God will not be loved as a barren wilderness, a land of darkness to us, neither will He be served for naught, Jer. ii. 31, Isa. xlv. 19. He would think it a dishonor to Him to be owned by us as our God, if He had not prepared for us a city, Heb. xi. 16. And He draws us to love Him by "the cords of a man," such cords as the love of man uses to be drawn by, even by His own love to us, in laying His benefits before us, Hos. xi. 4. Therefore the way for us to "keep ourselves in the love of God," is "to look for His mercy unto eternal life," Jude, ver. 21.

The LAST ENDOWMENT, for the same end as the former, is, that we be well persuaded of sufficient strength both to will and perform our duty acceptably, until we come to the enjoyment of the heavenly happiness. This is contrary to the error of those that account it sufficient, if we have strength to practise holiness, if we will, or to will it if we please; and this is the sufficient strength which they earnestly contend for, as a great benefit bestowed on all mankind by universal redemption. It is also contrary to the error of those that think the practice of godliness and wickedness to be alike easy, excepting only some difficulty in the first alterations of vicious customs, and in bearing persecutions, which they account to be a rare case, since the kingdoms of the world have been brought to the profession of Christianity; or that think that God requires of men only to do their endeavor, that is, what they can do; and it is nonsense to say they cannot do what they can do. According to their judgment, it is needless to concern themselves much about sufficient strength for holy practice. For the confirmation of the assertion, against those errors, take these arguments.

First, We are, by nature, dead in trespasses and sins, unable to will or to do anything that is spiritually

good, notwithstanding the redemption that is by Christ, until we be actually quickened by Christ, Eph. ii. 1, Rom. viii. 7, 8, 9. Those that are sufficiently enlightened and humbled, know themselves to be naturally in this case, and that they do not only want executive power to do good, but chiefly a heart to will it, and to be pleased with it; and that, if God work not in them both to will and to do, they shall neither will nor do anything pleasing to Him, Phil. ii. 13; and that, if He leave them to their own corruption, after He has begun the good work, they shall certainly prove vile apostates, and their latter end will be worse than their beginning. We may conclude from hence, that whoever can courageously attempt the practice of the law, without being well persuaded of a sufficient power, whereby he may be enabled to be heartily willing, as well as to perform when he is willing, until he has gone through the whole work of obedience acceptably; such a one was never yet truly humbled, and brought to know the plague of his own heart; neither does he truly believe the doctrine of original sin, whatever formal profession he may make of it.

Secondly, Those that think sincere conformity to the law in ordinary cases to be so very easy, show that they neither know it nor themselves. Is it an easy thing to wrestle, not against flesh only, but “against principalities, powers, spiritual wickedness in high places?” Eph. vi. 12. Is it an easy thing not to lust or covet, according to the tenth commandment? The Apostle Paul found it so difficult to obey this commandment, that his concupiscence prevailed the more by occasion of the commandment, Rom. viii. 7, 8. Our work is, not only to alter vicious customs, but to mortify corrupt natural affections which bred those customs; and not only to deny the fulfilling of sinful lusts, but to be full of holy love and desires: yet even the restraining the execution of corrupt lusts, and crossing them by contrary actings, is, in many cases, like “the

cutting off a right hand, and plucking out a right eye," Matt. v. 29, 30. If obedience be so easy, how came it to pass that the heathens generally did those things for which their own consciences condemned them as worthy of death? Rom. i. 32; and that many among us "seek to enter in at the strait gate, and are not able," Luke xiii. 24; and break so many vows and purposes of obedience, and fall back to the practice of their lusts, though, in the mean time, the fears of eternal damnation press hard upon their consciences?

As to those that find persecution for religion to be so rare a thing in late days, they have cause to be suspected, that they "are of the world, and therefore the world loveth its own;" else they would find, that national profession of religion will not secure those that are truly godly from several sorts of persecutions. And suppose men do not persecute us for religion, yet there is great difficulty in bearing great injuries from men on other accounts, and losses, poverty, bodily pains, long diseases, and untimely deaths, from the ordinary providence of God, with such hearty love to God, and to injurious men for His sake, and such a patient acquiescence in His will, as the law of God requires. I acknowledge, that the work of God is easy and pleasant to those whom God rightly furnishes with endowments for it; but those that assert it to be easy to men in their common condition, show their imprudence, in contradicting the general experience of heathens and Christians. Though many duties do not require much labor of body or mind, and might be done with ease, if we were willing, yet it is easier to remove a mountain, than to move and incline the heart to will and effect the doing of them. I need not concern myself with those who account that all have sufficient strength for a holy practice, because they can do their endeavor, that is, what they can do; for God requires actual fulfilling of His commands. What, if by our endeavors we can do nothing in any measure according to the rule, shall the

law be put off with no performance? and shall such endeavors be accounted sufficient holiness? And what if we cannot so much as endeavor in a right way? If a man's ability were the measure of acceptable duty, the commands of the law would signify very little.

Thirdly, The wisdom of God has ever furnished people with a good persuasion of a sufficient strength, that they might be enabled both to will and do their duty. The first Adam was furnished with such a strength; and we have no cause to think that he was ignorant of it, or that he needed to fear that he should be left to his own corruptions; because he had no corruptions in him, until he had produced them in himself by sinning against strength; and, when he had lost that strength, he could not recover the practice of holiness, until he was acquainted with a better strength, whereby the head of Satan should be bruised, Gen. iii. 15. Our Lord Jesus Christ doubtless knew the infinite power of His Deity to enable Him for all that He was to do and suffer in our nature. He knew the Lord God would help Him, "therefore He should not be confounded," Isa. l. 7. The Scripture shows what plentiful assurance of strength God gave to Moses, Joshua, and Gideon, when He called them to great employments: and to the Israelites, when He called them to subdue the land of Canaan. Christ would have the sons of Zebedee to consider whether they were able "to drink of His cup, and to be baptized with the baptism that he was baptized with," Matt. xx. 22. Paul encourages believers to the life of holiness, by persuading them, that sin shall not prevail to get the dominion over them, because they "are not under the law, but under grace," Rom. vi. 13, 14. And he exhorts them "to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, that they might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil," Eph. vi. 10, 11. John exhorts believers "not to love the world, nor the things of the world, because they were strong, and had overcome

the wicked one," 1 John ii. 14, 15. They that were called of God heretofore to work miracles, were first acquainted with the gift of power to work them, and no wise man will attempt to do them without knowledge of the gift; even so, when men that are dead in sin, are called to do the works of a holy life, which are in them great miracles, God makes a discovery of the gift of power unto them, that He may encourage them in a rational way to such a wonderful enterprise.

DIRECTION III.

The way to get holy endowments and qualifications necessary to frame and enable us for the immediate practice of the law, is to receive them out of the fulness of Christ, by fellowship with Him; and, that we may have this fellowship, we must be in Christ, and have Christ Himself in us, by a mystical union with Him.

EXPLICATION.

HERE, as much as anywhere, we have great cause to acknowledge, with the Apostle, that, "without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness," even so great, that it could "not have entered into the heart of man to conceive it, if God had not made it known" in the Gospel by supernatural revelation. Yea, though it be revealed clearly in the Holy Scriptures, yet the natural man has not eyes to see it there; for it is foolishness to him; and, if God express it ever so plainly and properly, he will think that God is speaking riddles and parables. And I doubt not but it is still a riddle and parable even to many truly godly, who have received a holy nature in this way; for the apostles themselves had the saving benefit of 't, before the

Comforter discovered it clearly to them, John xiv. 20. And they walked in Christ as the way to the Father, before they clearly knew Him to be the way, John xiv. 5. And the best of us know it but in part, and must wait for the perfect knowledge of it in another world.

One great mystery is, that the holy frame and disposition whereby our souls are furnished and enabled for immediate practice of the law, must be obtained "by receiving it out of Christ's fulness," as a thing already prepared and brought to an existence for us in Christ, and treasured up in Him : and that, as we are justified by a righteousness wrought out in Christ, and imputed to us, so we are sanctified by such a holy frame and qualifications, as are first wrought out, and completed in Christ for us, and then imparted to us. And as our natural corruption was produced originally in the first Adam, and propagated from him to us, so our new nature and holiness is first produced in Christ, and derived from Him to us, or, as it were, propagated. So that we are not at all to work together with Christ, in making or producing that holy frame in us, but only to take it to ourselves, and use it in our holy practice, as made ready to our hands. Thus we have fellowship with Christ, in receiving that holy frame of spirit that was originally in Him ; for fellowship is when several persons have the same thing in common, 1 John i. 1, 2, 3. This mystery is so great, that, notwithstanding all the light of the Gospel, we commonly think that we must get a holy frame, by producing it anew in ourselves, and by forming and working it out of our own hearts. Therefore, many that are seriously devout, take a great deal of pains to mortify their corrupt nature, and beget a holy frame of heart in themselves, by striving earnestly to master their sinful lusts, and by pressing vehemently upon their hearts many motives to godliness, laboring importunately to squeeze good qualifications out of them, as oil out of a flint. They account, that though they

be justified by a righteousness wrought out by Christ, yet they must be sanctified by a holiness wrought out by themselves. And though, out of humility, they are willing to call it infused grace, yet they think they must get the infusion of it by the same manner of working, as if it were wholly acquired by their own endeavors. On this account they acknowledge the entrance into a godly life to be harsh and displeasing, because it costs so much struggling with their own hearts and affections to new-frame them. If they knew that this way of entrance is not only harsh and unpleasant, but altogether impossible; and that the true way of mortifying sin and quickening themselves to holiness, is by receiving a new nature out of the fullness of Christ; and that we do no more to the production of a new nature, than of original sin, though we do more to the reception of it; if they knew this, they might save themselves many a bitter agony, and a great deal of misspent burdensome labor, and employ their endeavors to enter in at the strait gate, in such a way as would be more pleasant and successful.

Another great mystery in the way of sanctification, is, the glorious manner of our fellowship with Christ, in receiving a holy frame of heart from Him. It is by our being in Christ, and having Christ Himself in us; and that not merely by His universal presence as He is God, but by such a close union, as that we are one spirit and one flesh with Him; which is a privilege peculiar to those that are truly sanctified. I may well call this a mystical union, because the Apostle calls it a great mystery, in an epistle full of mysteries, Eph. v. 22, intimating, that it is eminently great above many other mysteries. It is one of the three mystical unions that are the chief mysteries in religion. The other two are, the union of the Trinity of Persons in one Godhead, and the union of the divine and human natures in one Person, Jesus Christ, God and man. Though we cannot frame an exact idea of the manner

of any of these three unions in our imaginations, because the depth of these mysteries is beyond our comprehension, yet we have cause to believe them all, because they are clearly revealed in Scripture, and are a necessary foundation for other points of Christian doctrine. Particularly, this union between Christ and believers is plain in several places of Scripture, affirming that Christ is, and “dwelleth in believers, and they in Him,” John vi. 56, and xiv. 20 ; and that they are so joined together as to become one spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17 ; and that believers are members of Christ’s body, of His flesh, and of His bones ; and they two, Christ and the Church, are “one flesh,” Eph. v. 30, 31. Furthermore, this union is illustrated in Scripture by various resemblances, which would be very much unlike the things which they are made use of to resemble, and would rather seem to beguile us by obscuring the truth, than instruct us by illustrating it, if there were no true proper union between Christ and believers. It is resembled by the union between God the Father and Christ, John xiv. 20, and xvii. 21, 22, 23 ; between the vine and its branches, John xv. 4, 5 ; between the head and body, Eph. i. 22, 23 ; between bread and the eater, John vi. 51, 53, 54. It is not only resembled, but sealed in the Lord’s Supper ; where neither the Popish transubstantiation, nor the Lutherans’ consubstantiation, nor the Protestants’ spiritual presence of Christ’s body and blood to the true receivers, can stand without it. And, if we can imagine that Christ’s body and blood are not truly eaten and drunk by believers, either spiritually or corporally, we shall make the bread and wine, joined with the words of institution, not only naked signs, but such signs as are much more apt to produce false notions in us, than to establish us in the truth. And there is nothing in this union so impossible, or repugnant to reason, as may force us to depart from the plain and familiar sense of those Scriptures that express and illustrate it. Though

Christ be in heaven, and we on earth, yet He can join our souls and bodies to His at such a distance, without any substantial change of either, by the same infinite Spirit dwelling in Him and us ; and so our flesh will become His, when it is quickened by His Spirit ; and His flesh ours, as truly as if we did eat His flesh and drink His blood ; and He will be in us Himself by His Spirit, who is one with Him, and who can unite more closely to Christ than any material substance can do, or who can make a more close and intimate union between Christ and us. And it will not follow from hence, that a believer is one person with Christ, any more than that Christ is one Person with the Father by that great mystical union. Neither will a believer be hereby made God, but only the temple of God, as Christ's body and soul is ; and the Spirit's lively instrument, rather than the principal cause. Neither will a believer be necessarily perfect in holiness hereby ; or Christ made a sinner : for Christ knows how to dwell in believers by certain measures and degrees, and to make them holy so far only as He dwells in them. And though this union seem too high a preferment for such unworthy creatures as we are, yet, considering the preciousness of the blood of God, whereby we are redeemed, we should dishonor God, if we should not expect a miraculous advancement to the highest dignity that creatures are capable of, through the merits of that blood. Neither is there anything in this union contrary to the judgment of sense, because the bond of the union, being spiritual, falls not at all under the judgment of sense.

Several learned men of late acknowledge no other union between Christ and believers, than such as persons or things wholly separated, may have by their mutual relations to each other ; and they interpret accordingly the places of Scripture that speak of this union. When Christ is called the head of the Church, they account, that a political head or governor is the

thing meant. When Christ is said to be in His people, and they in Him, they think that the proper meaning is, that Christ's law, doctrine, grace, salvation, or that godliness is in them, and embraced by them: so that Christ here must not be taken for Christ Himself, but for some other thing wrought in them by Christ. When Christ and believers are said to be one spirit, and one flesh, they understand it of the agreement of their minds and affections; as if the greatness of the mystery of this union, mentioned, Eph. v. 32, consisted rather in a harsh trope, or a dark, improper expression, than in the depth and abstruseness of the thing itself; and as if Christ and His Apostles had affected obscure, intricate expressions, when they speak to the Church of things very plain and easy to be understood. Thus, that great mystery, the union of believers with Christ Himself, which is the glory of the Church, and has been highly owned formerly, both by the ancient fathers, and many eminent Protestant divines, particularly writers concerning the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and by a very general consent of the Church in many ages, is now exploded out of the new model of divinity. The reason of exploding it, as I judge in charity, is not, because our learned refiners of divinity think themselves less able to defend it, than the other two mysterious unions, and to silence the objections of those proud sophists that will not believe what they cannot comprehend; but rather, because they account it to be one of the sinews of Antinomianism, that lay unobserved in the former usual doctrine; that it tends to puff up men with a persuasion that they are justified, and have eternal life in them already, and that they need not depend any longer upon their uncertain performances of the condition of sincere obedience for salvation: whereby they account the very foundation of a holy practice to be subverted. But the wisdom of God has laid another manner of foundation for a holy practice than they imagine, of which this union (which the builders refuse)

is a principal stone, next to the head of the corner. And, in opposition to their corrupt glosses upon the Scriptures that prove it, I assert, that our union with Christ is the cause of our subjection to Christ as a political head in all things, and of the abiding of His law, doctrine, grace, salvation, and all godliness in us, and of our agreement with Him in our minds and affections; and, therefore, it cannot be altogether the same thing with them. And this assertion is useful for a better understanding of the excellency of this union. It is not a privilege procured by our sincere obedience and holiness, as some may imagine, or a reward of good works reserved for us in another world; but a privilege bestowed upon believers in their very first entrance into a holy state, on which all ability to do good works depends, and all sincere obedience to the law follow after it, as fruit produced by it.

Having thus far explained the direction, I shall now show, that though the truth contained in it be above the reach of natural reason, yet it is evidently discovered to those that have their understandings opened, to discern that supernatural revelation of the mysterious way of sanctification, which God has given to us in the Holy Scriptures.

First, There are several places in Scripture that plainly express it. Some texts show, “that all things pertaining to our salvation, are treasured up for us in Christ, and comprehended in His fulness;” so that we must have them thence, or not at all; Col. i. 9. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell.” And, in the same epistle, Col. ii. 11, 12, 13, the Apostle shows that the holy nature whereby we live to God was first produced in us by His death and resurrection: “In whom also ye are circumcised in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh; buried with Him; quickened together with Him, when you were dead in your sins,” Eph. i. 3. “Who hath blessed

us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." A holy frame of spirit, with all its necessary qualifications, must needs be comprehended in "all spiritual blessings:" and these are given us in Christ's person in heavenly places, as prepared and treasured up in Him for us while we are upon earth; and, therefore, we must have our holy endowments out of Him, or not at all. In this text some choose rather to read *heavenly things*, as in the margin, because neither places nor things are expressed in the original; but the former textual reading is to be preferred before the marginal, as being the proper sense of the original Greek phrase, which is, and must necessarily be so rendered in two other places of this same epistle, chap. iii. 10, and vi. 12. Another text is, 1 Cor. i. 30, which shows, that "Christ is of God made unto us sanctification," by which we are able to walk holily; as well as wisdom, by the knowledge of which we are savingly wise; and righteousness, by the imputation of which we are justified; and redemption, whereby we are redeemed from all misery, to the enjoyment of His glory, as our happiness in the heavenly kingdom.

Other texts of Scripture show plainly that we receive our holiness out of His fulness by fellowship with Him, John i. 16, 17. "Of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace." And it is understood of grace answerable to the Law given by Moses, which must needs include the grace of sanctification, 1 John i. 3, 5, 6, 7. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. God is light. If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." Hence we may infer that our fellowship with God and Christ, includes particularly our having light, and walking in it holily and righteously. There are other texts that reach the proof of the whole direction fully; showing, not only that our holy endowments are made ready first in Christ for us, and received from Christ, but that we receive them by

union with Christ, Col. iii. 10, 11. "Ye have put on the new man, which is renewed after the image of Him that created him : where Christ is all and in all," 1 Cor. vi. 17. "He that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit," Gal. ii. 20. "I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," 1 John v. 11, 12. "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life ; and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son, hath life ; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life." Can we desire that God should more clearly teach us, that all the fulness of the new man is in Christ ; and all that spiritual nature and life whereby we live to God in holiness ; and that they are fixed in Him so inseparably, that we cannot have them except we be joined to Him, and have Himself abiding in us ? Take heed, lest, through prejudice, and hardness of heart, you be guilty of making God a liar, in not believing this eminent record, that God hath given to us of His Son.

Secondly, God is pleased to illustrate this mysterious manner of our sanctification by such a variety of similitudes and resemblances as may put us out of doubt that it is truth, and such a truth as we are highly concerned to know and believe. I shall endeavor to condense the chief of these resemblances, and the force of them, briefly into one sentence ; leaving it to those that are spiritual, to enlarge their meditation upon them. We receive from Christ a new holy frame and nature, whereby we are enabled for a holy practice, by union and fellowship with Him ; in like manner, 1st, As Christ lived in our nature by the Father, John vi. 57. 2dly, As we receive original sin and death propagated to us from the first Adam, Rom. v. 12, 14, 16, 17. 3dly, As the natural body receives sense, motion, nourishment, from the head, Col. ii. 19. 4thly, As the branch receives its sap, juice, and fructifying virtue from the vine, John xv. 4, 5. 5thly, As the wife bringeth forth fruit by virtue of her conjugal union with her husband, Rom. vii. 4. 6thly, As stones be-

come a holy temple, by being built upon the foundation, and joined with the chief corner-stone, 1 Peter ii. 4, 5, 6. 7thly, As we receive the nourishing virtue of bread by eating it, and of wine by drinking it, John vi. 51, 55, 57, which last resemblance is used to seal to us our communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper. Here are seven resemblances adduced, whereof some illustrate the mystery spoken of more fully than others: all of them in some way intimate, that our new life and holy nature is first in Christ, and then in us, by a true proper union and fellowship with Him. If any should urge, that the similitude of Adam and his seed, and of married couples, do make rather for a relative than a real union betwixt Christ and us, let them consider, that all nations are really made of one blood, which was first in Adam, Acts xvii. 26; and that the first woman was made out of the body of Adam, and was really "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh." And by this first married couple, the mystical union of Christ and His Church is eminently resembled, (Compare Gen. ii. 22, 23, 24, with Eph. v. 30, 31, 32.) And yet it supposes both these resemblances in the nearness and fulness of them; because "those that are joined to the Lord, are" not only one flesh, but "one spirit with Him."

Thirdly, The end of Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection, was to prepare and form a holy nature and frame for us in Himself, to be communicated to us by union and fellowship with Him; and not to enable us to produce in ourselves the first original of such a holy nature, by our own endeavors.

1. By His incarnation, there was a man created in a new holy frame, after the holiness of the first Adam's frame had been marred and abolished by the first transgression; and this new frame was far more excellent than ever the first Adam's was; because man was really joined to God by a close, inseparable union of the divine and human nature in one person, Christ; so

that these natures had communion each with the other in their actings, and Christ was able to act in His human nature, by power proper to the divine nature, wherein He was one God with the Father. The words that He spake while He was upon earth, He spoke not of Himself, by any mere human power, but the Father that dwelt in Him, He did the works, John xiv. 10. Why was it that Christ set up the fallen nature of man in such a wonderful frame of holiness, in bringing it to live and act by communion with God, living and acting in it? One great end was, that He might communicate this excellent frame to His seed, that should be born of Him and in Him, by His Spirit, "as the last Adam, the quickening Spirit:" that, "as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so we might also bear the image of the heavenly," 1 Cor. xv. 45, 46, in holiness here, and in glory hereafter. Thus He was born Emmanuel, God with us; because the fulness of the Godhead, with all holiness, did first dwell in Him bodily even in His human nature; that we might be filled up with that fulness in Him, Matt. i. 23, Col. ii. 9, 10. Thus He came down from heaven as living bread, that, as He lives by the Father, so those that eat Him may live by Him, John vi. 51, 56, by the same life of God in them that was first in Him.

2. By His death, He freed Himself from the guilt of our sins, imputed to Him, and from all that innocent weakness of His human nature, which He had borne for a time for our sakes. And, by freeing Himself, He prepared a freedom for us, from our whole natural condition; which is both weak as His was, and also polluted with our guilt and sinful corruption. Thus the corrupt natural estate, which is called in Scripture *the old man*, was crucified together with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed. And it is destroyed in us, not by any wounds that we ourselves can give to it, but by our partaking of that freedom from it, and death unto it, that is already wrought out for us by

the death of Christ; as is signified by our baptism, wherein we are buried with Christ by the application of His death to us, Rom. vi. 2, 3, 4, 10, 11. God "sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, for sin, (or, *by a sacrifice for sin*, as in the margin) condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii. 3, 5. Observe here, that though Christ died, that we might be justified by the righteousness of God and of faith, not by our own righteousness, which is of the law, Rom. x. 4, 5, 6, Phil. iii. 9, yet He died also, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, and that by walking after His Spirit, as those that are in Christ, Rom. *ibid.* He is compared in His death to a corn of wheat dying in the earth, that it may propagate its own nature, by bringing forth much fruit, John xii. 24 to the passover that was slain, that a feast might be kept upon it; and to bread broken, that it may be nourishment to those that eat it, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8, and xi. 24; to the rock smitten, that water may gush out of it for us to drink, 1 Cor. x. 4. He died, that He might make of Jew and Gentile, one new man in Himself, Eph. ii. 15, and that He might see His seed; i. e., such as derive their holy nature from Him, Isa. liii. 10. Let these Scriptures be well observed, and they will sufficiently evidence that Christ died, not that we might be able to form a holy nature in ourselves, but that we might receive one ready prepared and formed in Christ for us, by union and fellowship with Him.

3. By His resurrection, He took possession of spiritual life for us, as now fully procured for us, and made to be our right and property by the merit of His death: and, therefore, we are said to be "quickened together with Christ, even when we were dead in sins," and to "be raised up together," yea, and to be made "to sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus," as our head, while we continue upon earth in our own per-

sons, Eph. ii. 5, 6. His resurrection was our resurrection to the life of holiness, as Adam's fall was our fall into spiritual death. And we are not ourselves the first makers and formers of our new holy nature, any more than of our original corruption; but both are formed ready for us to partake of them. And, by union with Christ, we partake of that spiritual life that He took possession of for us at His resurrection, and thereby we are enabled to bring forth the fruits of it; as the Scripture shows by the similitude of a marriage union, Rom. vii. 4: "We are married to Him that is risen from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God." Baptism signifies the application of Christ's resurrection to us as well as His death; we are raised up with Him, in it, to newness of life, as well as buried with Him; and we are taught thereby, that, because "He died unto sin once, and liveth unto God, we should likewise reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. vi. 4, 5, 10, 11.

Fourthly, Our sanctification is by the Holy Ghost, by whom we live and walk holily, Rom. xv. 16, Gal. v. 25. Now, the Holy Ghost first rested on Christ in all fulness, that He might be communicated from Him to us; as was signified to John the Baptist, by the similitude of the descending of a dove from the opened heavens, resting on Christ at His baptism, John i. 32, 33. And, when He sanctifies us, He baptizes us unto Christ, and joins us to Christ by Himself, as the great bond of union, 1 Cor. xii. 13. So that, according to the scriptural phrase, it is all one, to have Christ Himself, and to have the Spirit of Christ, in us, Rom. viii. 9, 10. "He glorifieth Christ: for he receiveth those things that are Christ's, and sheweth them to us," John xvi. 14, 15. He gives us an experimental knowledge of those spiritual blessings which He Himself prepared for us by the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Fifthly, The effectual causes of those four principal endowments, which, in the foregoing direction, were asserted as necessary to furnish us for the immediate practice of holiness, are comprehended in the fulness of Christ, and treasured up for us in Him; and the endowments themselves, together with their causes, are attained richly by union and fellowship with Christ. If we be joined to Christ, our hearts will be no longer left under the power of sinful inclinations, or in a mere indifference of inclination to good or evil; but they will be powerfully endued with a power, bent, and propensity to the practice of holiness, by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, and inclining us to mind spiritual things, and to lust against the flesh, Rom. viii. 1, 4, 5, Gal. v. 17. And we have in Christ a full reconciliation with God, and an advancement into higher favor with Him, than the first Adam had in the state of innocency; because the righteousness that Christ wrought out for us by His obedience unto death, is imputed to us for our justification; which is called the righteousness of God, because it is wrought by one that is God as well as man; and therefore it is of infinite value, to satisfy the justice of God for all our sins, and to procure his pardon and highest favor for us, 2 Cor. v. 21, Rom. v. 19. And, that we may be persuaded of this reconciliation, we receive the spirit of adoption through Christ, whereby we cry, *Abba, Father*, Rom. viii. 15. Hereby also we are persuaded of our future enjoyment of the everlasting happiness, and of sufficient strength both to will and to perform our duty acceptably, until we come to that enjoyment. For the Spirit of adoption teaches us to conclude, that, "if we be the children of God, then we are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ;" and that "the law of the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus, maketh us free from the law of sin and death;" and that nothing shall be against us, nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Christ; but notwithstanding all the opposition and difficulties we meet with,

we shall be at last, "More than conquerors through Him that loved us," Rom. viii. 17, 23, 35, 37, 39. Furthermore, this comfortable persuasion of our justification and future happiness, and all saving privileges, cannot tend to licentiousness, as it is given only in this way of union with Christ; because it is joined inseparably with the gift of sanctification, by the Spirit of Christ; so that we cannot have justification, or any saving privilege in Christ, except we receive Christ Himself, and His holiness, as well as any other benefit; as the Scripture testifies, that "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii. 1.

Sixthly, Whereas, it may be doubted, whether the saints that lived before the coming of Christ in the flesh, could possibly be one flesh with Him, and receive a new nature by union and fellowship with Him, as prepared for them in His fulness; we are to know, that the same Christ that took our flesh, was before Abraham, John viii. 58, and was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, to be sacrificed as a lamb without blemish, that He might redeem us from all iniquity by His precious blood, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19, 20. And He had the same spirit then, which filled His human nature with all its fulness afterwards, and raised it from the dead; and He gave that spirit then to the Church, 1 Pet. i. 11, and iii. 18, 19. Now, this Spirit was able and effectual to unite these saints to that flesh which Christ was to take to Himself in the fulness of time, because He was the same in both, and to give out to them that grace with which Christ would afterwards fill His flesh, for their salvation, as well as ours. Therefore David accounted Christ's flesh to be his, and spoke of Christ's death and resurrection as his own, beforehand, as fully as any of us can do, since their accomplishment, Ps. xvi. 9, 10, 11. "My flesh also shall rest in hope; for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corrup-

tion. Thou wilt show me the path of life." Yea, and saints before David's time, "did all eat of the same spiritual meat, and drink of the same spiritual drink," even of the same Christ, as we do ; and therefore were partakers of the same privilege of union and fellowship with Christ, 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. And when Christ was manifested in the flesh, in the fulness of time, all things in heaven and on earth, all the saints departed, whose spirits were then made perfect in heaven, as well as these saints that then were, or should afterward be on earth, were "gathered together in one," and comprehended in Christ as their head, Eph. i. 10. And he was "the chief corner-stone, in whom the building of the whole Church upon the foundation of the prophets" before, and the Apostles after his coming, "being fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord," Eph. ii. 20, 21. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever," Heb. xiii. 8. His incarnation, death, and resurrection, were the cause of all the holiness that ever was or shall be given to man, from the fall of Adam, to the end of the world ; and that by the mighty power of His Spirit, whereby all saints that ever were or shall be, are joined together, to be members of that one mystical body whereof He is the head.

DIRECTION IV.

The means or instruments whereby the Spirit of God accomplishes our union with Christ, and our fellowship with Him in all holiness, are, the Gospel whereby Christ enters into our hearts to work faith in us; and faith whereby we actually receive Christ Himself, with all His fulness, into our hearts. And this faith is a grace of the Spirit, whereby we heartily believe the Gospel, and also believe on Christ, as He is revealed and freely promised to us therein, for all His salvation.

EXPLICATION.

THAT which I asserted, in the foregoing direction, concerning the necessity of our being in Christ, and having Christ in us, by a mystical union, to enable us for a holy practice, might put us to a stand in our endeavors for holiness; because we cannot imagine how we should be able to raise ourselves above our natural sphere, to this glorious union and fellowship, until God be pleased to make known to us, by supernatural revelation, the means whereby His Spirit makes us partakers of so high a privilege. But God is pleased to help us, when at a stand, to go on forward, by revealing two means or instruments whereby His Spirit accomplishes the mystical union and fellowship between Christ and us, and whereby rational creatures are capable of attaining thereunto, by His Spirit working in them.

One of these means is the Gospel of the grace of God; wherein God makes known to us the unsearchable riches of Christ, and Christ in us, the hope of glory, Eph. iii. 8, Col. i. 27; and also invites us and commands us to believe on Christ for His salvation; and encourages us by a free promise of that salvation to all that believe on Him, Acts xvi. 31, Rom. x. 9, 11. This is God's own instrument of conveyance, wherein He sends Christ to us to bless us with His salvation,

Acts iii. 26. It is the ministration of the Spirit and of righteousness, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 8, 9. Faith comes by the hearing of it; and therefore it is a great instrument whereby we are begotten in Christ, and Christ is formed in us, Rom. x. 16, 17, 1 Cor. iv. 15, Gal. iv. 19. There is no need for us to say in our hearts, "who shall ascend into heaven, to bring Christ down from above? or, who shall descend into the deep, to bring up Christ from the dead?" that we may be united, and have fellowship with Him in His death and resurrection; for the word is nigh to us, the Gospel, the word of faith, in which Christ Himself graciously condescends to be nigh to us; so that we may come at Him there, without going any further, if we desire to be joined to Him, Rom. x. 6, 7, 8.

The other of these means is faith, that is wrought in us by the Gospel. This is our instrument of reception, whereby the union between Christ and us is accomplished on our part, by our actual receiving Christ Himself, with all His fulness, into our heart; which is the principal subject of the present explanation.

The faith which philosophers commonly treat of, is only a habit of the understanding, whereby we assent to a testimony upon the authority of the testifier. Accordingly, some would have faith in Christ to be no more than believing the truth of things in religion, upon the authority of Christ testifying them. But the Apostle shows, that the faith whereby we are justified, is faith in Christ's blood, Rom. iii. 24, 25, not only in His authority as a testifier. And though a mere assent to a testimony were sufficient faith for knowledge of things, at which the philosophers aimed; yet we are to consider, that the design of saving faith, is not only to know the truth of Christ and His salvation, testified and promised in the Gospel, but also to apprehend and receive Christ and His salvation, as given by and with the promise. Therefore, saving faith must necessarily contain two acts, believing the truth of the Gospel, and

believing on Christ, as promised freely to us in the Gospel for all salvation. By the one, it receives the means wherein Christ is conveyed to us; by the other, it receives Christ Himself and his salvation in the means: as it is one act, to receive the breast or cup wherein milk or wine are conveyed, and another act, to suck the milk in the breast, and to drink the wine in the cup. And both these acts must be performed heartily, with an unfeigned love to the truth, and a desire of Christ and His salvation above all things. This is our spiritual appetite, which is necessary for our eating and drinking Christ, the food of life, as a natural appetite is for bodily nourishment. Our assenting to, or believing the Gospel, must not be forced by mere conviction of the truth, such as wicked men and devils may be brought to, when they had rather it were false; neither must our believing on Christ be only constrained for fear of damnation, without any hearty love and desire towards the enjoyment of Him; but we must receive the love of the truth, by relishing the goodness and excellency of it; and we must "account all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, and count them but dung, that we may win Christ, and be found in Him," 2 Thess. ii. 10, Phil. iii. 8, 9; esteeming Christ to be all our salvation and happiness, Col. iii. 11; "in whom all fullness doth dwell," Col. i. 19. And this love must be to every part of Christ's salvation; to holiness, as well as forgiveness of sins. We must desire earnestly, that God would create in us a clean heart and right spirit, as well as hide His face from our sins, Ps. li. 9, 10; not like many, that care for nothing in Christ but only deliverance from hell. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," Matt. v. 6. The former of these acts immediately unites us to Christ, because it is terminated only on the means of conveyance, the Gospel: yet it is a saving act, if it be rightly performed, because it inclines

and disposes the soul to the latter act, whereby Christ Himself is immediately received into the heart. He that believes the Gospel with hearty love and liking, as the most excellent truth, will certainly with the like heartiness believe on Christ for His salvation. "They that know the name of the Lord, will certainly put their trust in Him," Ps. ix. 10. Therefore, in Scripture, saving faith is sometimes described by the former of these acts, as if it were a mere believing the Gospel; sometimes by the latter, as a believing on Christ, or in Christ, Rom. x. 9. "If thou believe in thine heart, that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved," ver. 11. The Scripture says, "that whosoever believeth on Him, shall not be ashamed," 1 John v. 1: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." Ver. 13. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

For the better understanding of the nature of faith, let it be further observed, that the second and principal act of it, believing on Christ, includes believing on God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; because they are one and the same infinite God, and they all concur in our salvation by Christ, as the only Mediator between God and us, "in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen," 2 Cor. i. 20. "By Him (as Mediator) we believe on God, that raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God," 1 Pet. i. 21. And it is the same thing with trusting on God, or on the Lord, which is so highly commended in the whole Scripture, especially in the Old Testament; as may easily appear, by considering, that it has the same causes, effects, objects, adjuncts, opposites, and all the same circumstances, excepting only that it had a respect to Christ, as promised before His coming, and now it respects Him as al-

ready come in the flesh. "Believing in the Lord, and trusting on His salvation," are equivalent terms, that explain one another, Ps. lxxviii. 22. I confess, that trusting on things seen or known by the mere light of reason, as on our own wisdom, power, riches; on princes, or on any "arm of flesh," may not so properly be called believing on them; but trusting on a Saviour, as discovered by a testimony, is properly believing on Him. It is also the same thing that is expressed by the terms of resting, relying, leaning, staying ourselves on the Lord, called hoping in the Lord; because it is the ground of that expectation which is the proper act of hope, though our believing and trusting be for the present as well as future benefit of this salvation. The reason why it is so commonly expressed, in the Scriptures of the New Testament, by the terms of believing on Christ, might be probably, because, when that part of Scripture was written, there was cause in a special manner to urge believing the testimony that was then newly revealed by the Gospel.

Having thus explained the nature of faith, I come now to assert its proper use and office in our salvation: that it is the means and instrument whereby we receive Christ and all His fulness actually into our hearts. This excellent use and office of faith is encountered by a multitude of errors. Men naturally esteem, that it is too small and slight a thing to produce so great effects; as Naaman thought washing in Jordan, too small a matter for the cure of his leprosy. They condemn the true means of entering in at the strait gate, because they seem too easy for such a purpose; and thereby they make the entrance not only difficult, but impossible to themselves. Some will allow, that faith is the sole condition of our justification, and the instrument to receive it, according to the doctrine maintained formerly by the Protestants against the Papists; but they account, that it is not sufficient or effectual to

sanctification, but that it rather tends to licentiousness, if it be not joined with some other means, that may be powerful and effectual to secure a holy practice. They commend this great doctrine of Protestants, as a comfortable cordial for persons on their death-beds, or in agonies under terrors of conscience; but they account, that it is not good for ordinary food, and that it is wisdom in ministers to preach it seldom and sparingly; and not without some antidote or corrective, to prevent the licentiousness to which it tends. Their common antidote or corrective is, that sanctification is necessary to salvation as well as justification; and that though we be justified by faith, yet we are sanctified by our own performance of the law; and so they set up salvation by works, and make the grace of justification to be of no effect and not at all comfortable. If it had indeed such a malignant influence upon practice, it could not be owned as a doctrine proceeding from the most holy God; and all the comfort that it affords must needs be ungrounded and deceitful. This consequence is well understood by some late refiners of the Protestant religion; and therefore, they have thought fit to new-model this doctrine, and to make saving faith to be only a condition to procure a right and title to our justification by the righteousness of Christ, which must be performed, before we can lay any good claim to the enjoyment of it, and before we have any right to use any instrument for the actual receiving of it; and this they call an accepting of, or receiving Christ. And, that they may the better secure the practice of holiness by their conditional faith, they will not have trusting in God or Christ for salvation, to be accounted the principal saving act of it; because, as it seems to them, many loose wicked people trust on God and Christ for their salvation, as much as others, and are by their confidence hardened the more in their wickedness; but they had rather it should be obedience to all Christ's laws, at least in

resolution; or a consent that Christ should be their Lord, accepting of His terms of salvation, and a resignation of themselves to His government in all things. It is a sign that the Scripture form of teaching is grown into disesteem with our great masters of reason, when trusting in the Lord, so much commended in Scripture, is accounted a mean and ordinary thing. They endeavor to affright us from owning faith to be an instrument of justification, by telling us, that thereby, we that use the instrument, are made our own principal justifiers to the dishonor of God; though it might be easily answered, that we are made thereby only the principal receivers of our own justification from God, the giver of it, to whom all the glory belongs.

All these errors will fall, if it can be proved, that such a faith as I have described, is an instrument whereby we actually receive Christ Himself into our hearts, and holiness of heart and life, as well as justification by union and fellowship with Him. For the proof of it, I shall offer the following arguments.

First, By faith we have the actual enjoyment and possession of Christ Himself, and not only remission of sins, but of life, and so of holiness. "Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith," Eph. iii. 17. "We live to God; and yet not we, but Christ liveth in us, by the faith of the Son of God," Gal. ii. 19, 20. "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the Son, and everlasting life that is in Him," 1 John v. 12, 13, John iii. 30. "He that heareth Christ's word and believeth on Him that sent Christ hath everlasting life, and is passed from death unto life," John v. 24. These texts express clearly such a faith as I have described. Therefore the efficiency or operation of faith, in order to the enjoyment of Christ and His fulness, cannot be the procurement of a bare right or title to this enjoyment; but rather it must be an entrance into it, and taking possession of it. "We have our access and entrance by faith into that grace of Christ wherein we stand," Rom. v. 2.

Secondly, The Scripture plainly ascribes this effect to faith, that by it we receive Christ, put Him on, are rooted and grounded in Him ; and also that we receive the Spirit, remission of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified, John i. 12, Gal. iii. 26, 27, Col. ii. 6, 7, Gal. iii. 14, Acts xxvi. 18. And the Scripture illustrates this receiving by the similitude of eating and drinking ; “ he that believeth on Christ, drinketh the living water of His Spirit,” John vii. 37, 38, 39. “ Christ is the bread of life ; His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed.” And the way to eat and drink it, is to believe in Christ ; and by so doing, we dwell in Christ and Christ in us, and have everlasting life, John vi. 35, 47, 48, 54, 55, 56. How can it be taught more clearly, that we receive Christ himself properly into our souls by faith, as we receive food into our bodies by eating and drinking, and that Christ is as truly united to us thereby as our food, when we eat or drink it ? So, faith cannot be a condition to procure a mere right or title to Christ, any more than eating or drinking procures a mere right or title to our food ; but it is rather an instrument to receive it, as the mouth that eats and drinks the food.

Thirdly, Christ with all His salvation, is freely given by the grace of God to all that believe on Him : for “ we are saved by grace through faith : and that not of ourselves ; it is the gift of God,” Eph. ii. 8, 9. “ We are justified freely by His grace through faith in His blood,” Rom. iii. 24, 25. The Holy Ghost, who is the bond of union between Christ and us, is a gift, Acts ii. 38. Now, that which is a gift of grace, must not at all be earned, purchased or procured by any work or works performed as a condition to get a right or title to it ; and therefore faith itself must not be accounted such a conditional work. “ If it be by grace, it is no more of works ; otherwise grace is no more grace,” Rom. xi.* 6. The condition of a free gift is only, take and have. And in this sense, we will

readily acknowledge faith to be a condition, allowing a liberty in terms where we agree in the thing ; but if you give a peppercorn to purchase a title to it, then you spoil the freeness of the gift. The free offer of Christ to you is sufficient to confer upon you a right, yea, to make it your duty to receive Christ and His salvation as yours. And because we receive Christ by faith as a free gift, therefore we may account faith to be the instrument, and, as it were, the hand whereby we receive Him.

Fourthly, It has been already proved, that all spiritual life and holiness is treasured up in the fulness of Christ, and communicated to us by union with Him. Therefore the accomplishing of union with Christ, is the first work of saving grace in our hearts. And faith itself being a holy grace, and part of spiritual life, cannot be in us before the beginning of this union ; but rather it is given to us, and wrought in the very working of the union. And the way wherein it conduces to the union cannot be by procuring a mere title to Christ as a condition, because then it should be performed before the uniting work begins ; but rather by being an instrument, whereby we may actively receive and embrace Christ, who is already come into the soul, to take possession of it as His own habitation.

Fifthly, True saving faith, such as I have described, has, in its nature and manner of operation, a peculiar aptitude or fitness to receive Christ and His salvation, and to unite our souls to Him ; and to furnish the soul with a new holy nature, and to bring forth a holy practice by union and fellowship with Him. God has fitted natural instruments for their office, as the hands, feet, &c., so that we may know by their nature and natural manner of operation for what use they are designed. In like manner we may know, that faith is an instrument formed on purpose for our union with Christ, and our sanctification, if we consider what a peculiar fitness it has for the work. The discovery of

this is of great use for the understanding of the mysterious manner of our receiving and practising all holiness by union and fellowship with Christ, by this precious grace of faith. And, to make you, as it were, to see with your eyes, that it is such an instrument as I have asserted it to be, I shall present it to your view in three particulars.

1. The grace of faith is as well fitted for the soul's receiving Christ and union with Him, as any instrument of the body is for receiving and closing with things needful for it. By the very act of hearty trusting or believing on Christ for all salvation and happiness, the soul casts and puts away from itself, everything that keeps it at a distance from Christ; as all confidence in our strength, endeavors, works, privileges; or in any worldly pleasures, profits, honors; or in any human helps and succors for our happiness and salvation: because such confidences are inconsistent with our confidence in Christ, for all salvation. Paul by his confidence in Christ was taken off from all confidence in the flesh; he suffered the loss of glorying in his privileges and legal righteousness, and counted all other enjoyments in matters of the world or of religion, to be but "dung, that he might win Christ, and be found in Him," Phil. iii. 3, 6, 7, 8, 9. The voice of faith, is "Ashur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods; for in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy," Hos. xiv. 3. "We have no might against this great company of our spiritual enemies; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee," 2 Chron. xx. 12.

I might multiply places of Scripture to show what a self-emptying grace faith is, and how it casts other confidences out of the soul, by getting above them to Christ, as the only happiness and salvation. The same act of trusting or believing on Christ, or on God, is the very manner of our soul's coming to Christ, John vi.

35 ; drawing near to the Lord, Ps. lxxiii. 28 ; fleeing unto the Lord to hide us, Ps. cxliii. 9 ; making our refuge in the shadow of His wings, Ps. lvii. 1 ; staying ourselves and our minds upon the Lord, Isa. l. 10, and xxvi. 3 ; laying hold on eternal life, 1 Tim. vi. 12 ; lifting up our souls to the Lord, Ps. xxv. 1 ; rolling our way, and casting our burden upon the Lord, Ps. xxxvii. 5, and lv. 22 ; and of our eating and drinking Christ, as has already appeared. Let us consider, that Christ and His salvation cannot be seen, or handled, or attained to, by any bodily motion, but are revealed and promised to us in the Word. Now, let any invent, if they can, any way for the soul to exercise any motion or activity in receiving this unseen promised salvation, besides believing the Word, and trusting on Christ for the benefit promised. If Christ were to be earned by works, or any other kind of conditional faith, yet a faith must be instrumental to receive Him. Some think love as fit to be the uniting grace ; but I have showed that love to Christ's salvation is an ingredient of faith. And though love be an appetite to union, yet we have no other likely way to fill this appetite, while we are in this world, besides trust on Christ for all His benefits, as He is promised in the Gospel.

2. There is in this saving faith a natural tendency to furnish the soul with a holy frame and nature, and all endowments necessary thereunto, out of the fulness of Christ. A hearty, affectionate trusting on Christ for all His salvation, as freely promised to us, has, naturally, enough in it to work in our souls a rational bent and inclination to, and ability for, the practice of all holiness ; because it comprehends in it a trusting, " that, through Christ, we are dead to sin, and alive to God ; " that our " old man is crucified," Rom. vi. 2, 3, 4 ; and that we live by the Spirit, Gal. v. 25 ; and that we have forgiveness of sin ; and that God is our God, Ps. xxxi. 14 ; and that we have in the Lord righteousness and strength, whereby we are able to do all things, Isa. xlv.

24, Phil. iv. 13 ; and that we shall be gloriously happy in the enjoyment of Christ to all eternity, Phil. iii. 20, 21. When the saints in Scripture speak so highly of such glorious spiritual privileges, as I have here named, they acquaint us with the familiar sense and language of their faith, trusting on God and Christ, and they give us but an explication of the nature and contents of it ; and they speak of nothing more than what they receive out of the fulness of Christ. And how can we otherwise judge, but that those that have a hearty love to Christ, and can, upon a good ground, think and speak such high things concerning themselves, must needs be heartily disposed and mightily strengthened for the practice of holiness ?

3. Because faith has such a natural tendency to dispose and strengthen the soul for the practice of holiness, we have cause to judge it a meet instrument to accomplish every part of that practice in an acceptable manner. Those that with a due affection believe steadfastly on Christ for the free gift of all His salvation, may find, by experience, that they are carried forth, by that faith, according to the measure of its strength or weakness, to love God heartily, because God has loved them first, 1 John iv. 19 ; to praise Him, to pray unto Him in the name of Christ, Eph. v. 20 ; John xvi. 26, 27 ; to be patient with cheerfulness, under all afflictions, giving thanks to the Father, who hath called them to His heavenly inheritance, Col. i. 11, 12 ; to love all the children of God, out of love to their heavenly Father, 1 John v. 1 ; to walk as Christ walked, 1 John ii. 6 ; and to give themselves up to live to Christ in all things, as constrained by His love in dying for them, 2 Cor. v. 14. We have a cloud of witnesses concerning the excellent works that were produced by faith, Heb. xi. And though trusting on Christ be accounted such a slight and contemptible thing, yet I know no work of obedience, which it is not able to produce. And note the excellent manner of working by faith. By it we

live and act in all good works, as people in Christ, as raised above ourselves and our natural state, by partaking of Him and His salvation; and we do all in His name, and on His account. This is the practice of that mysterious manner of living to God in holiness, which is peculiar to the Christian religion, wherein we live; "and yet not we, but Christ liveth in us," Gal. ii. 20. And who can imagine any other way but this for such a practice, while Christ and His salvation are known to us only by the Gospel.

The explanation that I have made of the nature and office of true faith, and of its aptitude for its office, is sufficient to evidence that it is a most holy faith, as it is called, Jude, ver. 20; and that such a trusting on Christ as I have described, in its own nature, cannot have any tendency to licentiousness, but only to holiness; and that it roots and grounds us in holiness, more than the mere accepting of any terms of salvation, and consenting to have Christ for our Lord, can do; and is more powerful to secure a holy practice, than any of those resolutions of obedience, or resignating acts, that some would have to be the great conditions of our salvation; which are indeed no better than hypocritical acts, if they be not produced by this faith. There is indeed a counterfeit dead faith, such as wicked men may have; and, if that tend to licentiousness, let not true faith be blamed; but rather mark the description of it which I have given, that you may not be deceived with a counterfeit faith instead of it.

I shall add something concerning the efficient cause of this excellent grace, and of our union with Christ by it; whereby it may appear, that it is not so slight and easy a way of salvation as some may imagine. The author and finisher of our faith, and of our union and fellowship with Christ, by faith, is no less than the infinite Spirit of God, and God and Christ Himself by the Spirit; for, "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body of Christ and are all made to drink into one

Spirit," 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. "God granteth us, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with all might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith," Eph. iii. 16, 17. If we do but consider the great effect of faith, that by it we are raised to live above our natural condition, by Christ and His Spirit living in us, we cannot rationally conceive, that it should be within the power of nature to do anything that advances us so high. If God had done no more for us in our sanctification, than to restore us to our first natural holiness, yet this could not have been done without putting forth His own almighty power to quicken those that are dead in sin; how much more is this almighty power needful to advance us to this wonderful new kind of frame, wherein we live and act above all the power of nature, by a higher principle of life than was given to Adam in innocency, even by Christ and His Spirit living and acting in us? The natural man brings forth his offspring according to his image, by that natural power of multiplying, with which God blessed him at his first creation; but the second Adam brings forth His offspring new born according to His image, only by the Spirit, John iii. 5. "As many as receive Him, even those that believe on His name, are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 12, 13. Christ took His own human nature into personal union with Himself, in the womb of the virgin Mary, by the Holy Ghost coming upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowing her, the same power whereby the world was created, Luke i. 35. So He takes us into mystical union and fellowship with Himself, by no less than an infinite creating power; for "we are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works," Eph. ii. 10; "and if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," 2 Cor. v. 17.

For the accomplishing this great work of our new creation in Christ, the Spirit of God first works upon

our hearts by and with the Gospel, to produce in us the grace of faith. For, if the Gospel should come to us in word only, and not in power, and in the Holy Ghost, Paul might labor to plant and Apollos to water, without any success, because we cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God; yea, we shall account them foolishness, until the Spirit of God enable us to discern them, 1 Thess. i. 5, 1 Cor. iii. 6, and ii. 14. We shall never come to Christ by any teaching of man, except we also hear and learn of the Father, and be drawn to Christ by His Spirit, John vi. 44, 45. And, when saving faith is wrought in us, the same Spirit gives us fast hold of Christ by it. As He opens the mouth of faith to receive Christ, so He fills it with Christ; or else the acting of faith would be like a dream of one that thinks he eats and drinks, and, when he awakes, finds himself empty. The same Spirit of God both gave that faith whereby miracles are wrought, and worked also the miracles by it; so also the same Spirit of Christ works saving faith in us, and answers the aim and end of that faith, by giving us union and fellowship with Christ by it: so that none of the glory of this work belongs to faith, but only to Christ and His Spirit. And, indeed, faith is of such an humble, self-denying nature, that it ascribes nothing that it receives to itself, but all to the grace of God; and therefore God saves us by faith, that all the glory may be ascribed to His free grace, Rom. iv. 16. If Adam had strength enough in innocency to perform the duty of faith as well as we, yet, it will not follow, that he had strength enough to raise himself above his natural state, into union with Christ; because faith does not unite us to Christ by its own virtue, but by the power of the Spirit working by it, and with it. Thus are we first passive and then active, in this great work of mystical union; we are first apprehended of Christ, and then we apprehend Christ. Christ enters first into the soul, to join Himself to it, by giving it the spirit of faith; and

so the soul receives Christ and His Spirit by their own power ; as the sun first enlightens our eyes, and then we can see it by its own light. We may note further, to the glory of the grace of God, that this union is fully accomplished by Christ, giving the spirit of faith to us, even before we act that faith in the reception of Him ; because, by this grace or spirit of faith, the soul is inclined and disposed to an active receiving of Christ. And, no doubt, Christ is thus united to many infants, who have the spirit of faith, and yet cannot act faith, because they are not come to the use of their understandings ; but those of riper years, that are joined passively to Christ by the spirit of faith, will also join themselves with Him actively, by the act of faith : and, until they act this faith, they cannot know or enjoy their union with Christ, and the comfort of it, or make use of it, in acting any other duties of holiness acceptably in this life.

DIRECTION V.

We cannot attain to the practice of true holiness by any of our endeavors, while we continue in our natural state, and are not partakers of a new state, by union and fellowship with Christ through faith.

EXPLICATION.

It is evident, all have not that precious faith whereby Christ dwells in our hearts ; yea, the number of those that have it is small, comparatively to the “ whole world that lieth in wickedness,” 1 John v. 19, 20, and many of those that at length attain unto it, do continue without it for some considerable time, Eph. ii. 12. And though some may have the spirit of faith given to them from

their mother's womb, (as John the Baptist, Luke i. 15, 44,) yet even in them there is a natural being by generation, before there can be a spiritual being by regeneration, 1 Cor. xv. 46. Hence arises the consideration of two states or conditions of the children of men, in matters that appertain to God and godliness; the one of which is vastly different from the other. Those that have the happiness of a new birth and creation in Christ by faith, are thereby placed in a very excellent state, consisting in the enjoyment of the righteousness of Christ, for their justification; and of the Spirit of Christ, to live by, in holiness here, and glory forever; as has already appeared. Those that are not in Christ, by faith, cannot be in a better state than that which they received, together with their nature, from the first Adam, by being once born and created in Him, or than they can attain to by the power of that nature, with any such help as God is pleased to afford it. This latter I call a natural state; because it consists in such things as we have either received by natural generation or can attain to by natural power through divine assistance; as the Scripture calls man in this state the natural man, 1 Cor. ii. 14. The former I call a new state, because we enter into it by a new birth in Christ; and I may call it a spiritual state, according to the Scripture; because it is received from Christ the quickening Spirit; and the natural and spiritual man are opposed, 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15; though some call both these states spiritual, because the everlasting weal or woe of the soul or spirit of man is chiefly concerned in them.

It is a common error of those that are in a corrupt natural state, that they seek to reform their lives according to the law, without any thoughts that their state must be changed, before their lives can be changed from sin to righteousness. The heathens, that knew nothing of a new state in Christ, were urged by their own consciences to practise several duties of the law, according to the knowledge they had by the light

of nature, Rom. ii. 14, 15. Israel, according to the flesh, had a zeal of God and godliness, and endeavored to practise the written law, at least in external performances, while they were enemies to the faith of Christ. And Paul attained so far that he was blameless in these external performances in the righteousness of the law, while he persecuted the Church of Christ, Phil. iii. 6. Some are so near the kingdom of God, while they continue in a natural state, that they are convinced of the spirituality of the law, that it binds us principally to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to perform universal obedience to God, in all our inward thoughts and affections, as well as in all our outward actions, and to do all the duties that we owe to our neighbor out of this hearty love, Mark xii. 33, 34. And they struggle and labor, with great earnestness, to subdue their inward thoughts and affections to the law of God, and to abstain, not only from some sins, but from all known sins, and to perform every known duty of the law with their whole heart and soul, as they think; and are so active and intent in their devout practice, that they overwork their natural strength, and so fervent in their zeal that they are ready even to kill their bodies with fastings and other macerations, that they may kill their sinful lusts. They are strongly convinced, that holiness is absolutely necessary to salvation, and deeply affected with the terrors of damnation; and yet they were never so much enlightened in the mystery of the Gospel, as to know that a new state in Christ is necessary to a new life; therefore they labor in vain to reform their natural state, instead of getting above it in Christ. And some of these, when they have misspent many years in striving against the stream of their lusts without any success, do at last fall miserably into despair of ever attaining to holiness, and turn to wallowing in the mire of their lusts, or are fearfully swallowed up with horror of conscience.

There are several false opinions whereby such ignorant zealots encourage themselves in their fruitless endeavors. Some of them judge, that they are able to practise holiness because they are not compelled to sin, and may abstain from it, if they will. To this they add, that Christ, by the merit of His death, has restored that freedom of will to good, which was lost by the fall, and has set nature upon its legs again; and that, if they endeavor to do what lies in them, Christ will do the rest, by assisting them with the supplies of His saving grace; so they trust upon the grace of Christ to help them in their endeavors. They plead further, that it would not consist with the justice of God to punish them for sin, if they could not avoid it; and that it would be in vain for the ministers of the gospel to preach to them, and exhort them to any saving duty, if they cannot perform it. They produce examples of heathens, and of such as had the name of Christians, without any acquaintance with the faith that I have described, who have attained to a great excellency in religious words and works.

My work at present is, to deliver those ignorant zealots from their fruitless tormenting labors, by bringing them to despair of the attainment of holiness in a natural state, that they may seek it only in a new state by faith in Christ, where they may certainly find it without such tormenting labor and anxiety of spirit. For this end, I shall confirm the truth asserted in the direction, and fortify it against the before-mentioned false opinions, by the ensuing considerations.

First, The foundation of this assertion is firmly laid in the directions already explained, and confirmed by many places of Scripture. For, if all endowments necessary to enable us for a holy practice, are to be had only in a state of union and fellowship with Christ by faith, and faith itself, not by the natural power of free will, but by the power of Christ, coming into the soul

by His Spirit, to unite us with Himself ; who does not see that the attainment of true holiness by any of our most vigorous endeavors, while we continue in our natural condition, is altogether hopeless ? I need add no more, were it not to show more fully what abundance of light the Scripture affords to guide us aright in this part of our way, that those who wander out of it, by following any false light of their own, or other corrupted judgments, may find themselves the more inexcusable.

Secondly, It is evident, that we cannot practise true holiness, while we continue in a natural state ; because we must be “born again of water and of the Spirit, or else we cannot enter into the kingdom of God,” John iii. 3, 5 ; “and we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them,” Eph. ii. 10. If we could love God and our neighbor as the law requires, without a new birth and creation, we might live without them ; for Christ has said, “This do, and thou shalt live,” Luke x. 28. Now a new birth and creation is more than a mere reforming and repairing our natural state. If we were put into a certain state and condition by the first birth and creation, much more are we by the second. For the first produces the substance of a man, as well as a state ; the second has nothing to produce, but a new state of the same person. And note, that we were first created and born in Adam the natural man, but our new birth and creation is in Christ the spiritual man. And, if any man be in Christ he is in a new state, far different from the state of Adam before the fall ; he is wholly a new creature ; as it is written, “old things are past away ; behold all things are become new,” 2 Cor. v. 17.

Thirdly, It is positively asserted by the Apostle Paul, that “those that are in the flesh, cannot please God,” Rom. viii. 8. Many are too remiss and negligent in considering the sense of this gospel-phrase, what it

is to be "in the flesh." They understand no more by it than to be sinful, or to be addicted inordinately to please the sensitive appetite. They should consider, that the Apostle speaks here of "being in the flesh," as the cause of sinfulness; as in the next verse, he speaks of being in the spirit, as the cause of holiness; and, whatever cause it be, it must needs be distinct from its effect. Sin is a property of the flesh, or something that dwells in the flesh, Rom. vii. 18; and therefore it is not the flesh itself. The flesh is that which "lusteth against the Spirit," Gal. v. 17; and, therefore, it is not merely sinful lusting. The true interpretation is, that by flesh is meant the nature of man, as it is corrupted by the fall of Adam, and propagated from him to us, in that corrupt state, by natural generation; and to "be in the flesh," is to be in a natural state; as to "be in the Spirit," is to be in a new state, by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, Rom. viii. 9. The corrupt nature is called flesh, because it is received by carnal generation; and the new nature is called spirit, because it is received by spiritual regeneration. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit," John iii. 6. So the Apostle, if he be rightly understood, has said enough to make us despair utterly of attaining to true holiness, while we continue in a natural state.

Fourthly, The Apostle testifies, that "those that have been taught as the truth is in Jesus, have learned to avoid the former sinful conversation, by putting off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and by putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 21, 22, 24. Putting off the old man, and putting on the new man, is the same with not being in the flesh, but in the Spirit, in the foregoing testimony; that is, putting off our natural state, and putting on a new state, by union and fellowship with Christ. The Apostle himself shows, that by the new man is meant

that excellent state where Christ is all, and in all, Col. iii. 11. Therefore, by the old man must needs be meant the natural state of man, wherein he is without the saving enjoyment of Christ; which is called old because of the new state to which believers are brought by their regeneration in Christ. This is a manner of expression peculiar to the Gospel, as well as the former, and as slightly considered by those that think that the Apostle's meaning is only, that they should put off sinfulness, and put on holiness in their conversation; and so they think to become new men by turning over a new leaf in their practice, and leading a new life. Let them learn here, that the old and new man are two contrary states, containing in them not only sin and holiness, but all other things that dispose and incline us to the practice of them; and that the old man must be put off as crucified with Christ, before we can be freed from the practice of sin, Rom. vi. 6, 7. And therefore we cannot lead a new life, until we have first gotten a new state by faith in Christ. Let me add here, that the meaning of the Apostle is the same, Rom. xiii. 12, 13, 14, where he directs us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, as the means whereby we may cast off the deeds of darkness, and to walk honestly, as in the daytime; not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh.

Fifthly, Our natural state has several properties that wholly disable us for the practice of holiness, and enslave us to the practice of sin, while we continue in it. Here I shall show, that the old man, the flesh, or natural state, is not only sin, as some would have it; but it contains in it several things, which I shall name, that make it to be sinful, besides several other things that make it miserable. I have showed, that in Christ we have all endowments necessary to frame us for godliness; so, in our fleshly state, we have all things contrary to that holy frame. One thing belonging to our natural state, is the guilt of sin, even of Adam's first sin, and of the sinful depravation of our nature, and

of all our own actual transgressions; and therefore we are by nature the children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3, and under the curse of God. The benefit of remission of our sins, and freedom from condemnation, is not given to us in the flesh, or in a natural state, but only in Christ, Rom. viii. 1, Eph. i. 7. And can we imagine, that a man should be able to prevail against sin, while God is against him and curses him? Another property, inseparable from the former, is, an evil conscience, which denounces the wrath of God against us for sin, and inclines us to abhor Him, as our enemy, rather than to love Him, as hath been showed; or, if it be a blind conscience, it hardens us the more in our sins. A third property is, an evil inclination, tending only to sin; which, therefore, is called "sin that dwelleth in us, and the law of sin in our members," that powerfully subdues and captivates us to the service of sin, Rom. vii. 20, 23. It is a fixed propensity to lust against the law without any deliberation; and therefore its lustings are not to be prevented by any diligence or watchfulness. "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Rom. viii. 7. How vain, then, is it to plead, that they can do no good, if they will, when their minds, and the will itself, are enslaved in sin. A fourth property, is, subjection to the power of the devil, who is the god of this world, that has blinded the minds of all that believe not, 2 Cor. iv. 4, and will certainly conquer all whom he fights with upon his own ground; that is, in a natural state. And, from all these properties, we may well conclude, that our natural state has the property never to be good, to be stark dead in sin, Eph. ii. 1, according to the sentence denounced against the first sin of mankind in Adam. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," Gen. ii. 17. For you can no more bring it to holiness, by any the most vehement motives and endeavors, than you can bring a dead carcass to life, by chafing and rubbing it. You

can stir up no strength or fortifying grace in the natural man by such motives and endeavors; because there is no strength in him to be stirred up, Rom. v. 6. Though you do all that lies in you to the utmost, while you are in the flesh you can do nothing but sin; for there is no good thing in you: as the Apostle Paul shows by his own experience: "I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing," Rom. vii. 18.

Sixthly, We have no good ground to trust on Christ, to help us to will or to do that which is acceptable to Him, while we continue in our natural state, or imagine that freedom of will to holiness is restored to us by the merit of His death. For, as it hath been already showed, Christ aimed at a higher end, in His incarnation, death, and resurrection, than the restoration of the decay and ruins of our natural state. He aimed to advance us, by union and fellowship with Himself, to a new state, more excellent than the state of nature ever was, that we might live to God, not by the power of a natural free will, but by the power of His Spirit living and acting in us. So we may conclude, that our natural state is irrecoverable and desperate, because Christ, the only Saviour, did not aim at the recovery of it. It is neither holy nor happy, but subject to sin, and to all miseries, as long as it remains. Even those that are in a new state in Christ, and serve the law of God with their mind, do yet with their flesh serve the law of sin, Rom. vii. 25. As far as it remains in them, it lusts against the Spirit, Gal. v. 17, and it remains dead, because of sin, even when the Spirit is life to them, because of righteousness, Rom. viii. 10, and must be wholly abolished by death, before we can be perfected in that holiness and happiness that is by faith in Christ. After God had promised salvation by Christ, the seed of the woman, He placed cherubim and a flaming sword to keep man out of paradise; thereby teaching him, that his first state was lost without hope,

and that the happiness intended for him was wholly new. Our old natural man was not revived and reformed by the death of Christ, but crucified together with Him, and therefore to be abolished and destroyed out of us by virtue of His death, Rom. vi. 6. It is like the part of a garment infected with the plague of leprosy, which was to be rent off as incurable, that the garment might be clean, Lev. xiii. 56. "If Christ be not in us, we are reprobates," 2 Cor. xiii. 5; that is, we are in a state which God has rejected from partaking of His salvation; so that we are not to expect any assistance from God to make us holy in it, but rather to deliver us from it.

Seventhly, This does not at all discharge those that are in a natural state from obligation to holiness of life, nor render them excusable for their sins at the tribunal of God's justice. For "God hath made man upright, but they sought out many inventions," Eccles. vii. 29. Observe well the words of this text, and you will find, that all they who have sought out many inventions, rather than upright walking, are comprehended in man that was at first made upright. And man, in the text, signifies all mankind. The first Adam was all mankind, as Jacob and Esau were two nations in the womb of Rebecca, Gen. xxv. 23. God made us all, in our first parent, according to His own image, able and inclined to do His law; and, in that pure nature, our obligation to obedience was first laid upon us, and the first wilful transgression, whereby our first parent bereaved himself of the image of God, and brought upon himself the sentence of death, was our sin as well as his; for, "in one man, Adam, all have sinned, and so death is passed upon all," Rom. v. 12; because all mankind were in Adam's loins, when the first sin was committed; even as Levi may be said to have paid tithes in Abraham before he was born; because, when his father Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec, he was yet in his loins, Heb. vii. 9, 10. That the promise of

God, that He will not charge the iniquities of parents upon their children, is a promise belonging to the new covenant confirmed in the blood of Christ ; and it is yea and amen to us only in Christ, in whom we have another nature than that which our parents conveyed to us ; so that we cannot justly claim the benefit of it in our old natural state, Jer. xxxi. 29, 30, 31 ; and 2 Cor. i. 20. Those that account their impotency a sufficient plea to excuse them or others, show that they were never truly humbled for that great wilful transgression of all mankind in the loins of Adam. Inability to pay debt, excuses not a debtor who has lavished away his estate ; neither does drunkenness excuse the mad actings of a drunkard, but rather aggravates his sin. And our impotency consists not in a mere want of executive power, but in the want of a willing mind, to practise true holiness and righteousness. Naturally we love it not, we like it not, but lust against it, Gal. v. 17, and hate the light, John iii. 20. If men in a natural state had a hearty love and liking to true holiness, and a desire and serious endeavor to practise it, out of hearty love, and yet failed in the event, then they might, under some pretence, plead for their excuse, (as some do for them,) that they were compelled to sin by an inevitable fate. But none have just cause to plead any such thing for their excuse ; because none endeavor to practise true holiness out of hearty love to it, until the good work be begun in their souls ; and, when God has begun, he will perfect it, Phil. i. 6, and will, in the mean time, accept their ready mind, though they fall short in performance, 2 Cor. viii. 12. "How abominable then and filthy is man, that drinketh iniquity as water," Job xv. 16, that cannot practise holiness, because he will not. This is their just condemnation, "that they love darkness rather than light." They deserve to be partakers with the devils in torments, as they partake with them in evil lusts ; and

their inability to do good, will no more excuse them, than it excuses the devils.

Eighthly, Neither will this assertion make it a vain thing to preach the Gospel to natural people, and to exhort them to true repentance, and faith in Christ for their conversion and salvation. For the design of our preaching is, not to bring them to holiness in their natural state, but to raise them above it, and to present them perfect in Christ in the performance of those duties, Col. i. 28. And though they cannot perform those duties by their natural strength, yet the Gospel is made effectual for their conversion and salvation, by the power of the Holy Ghost which accompanies the preaching of it, to quicken those that are dead in sin, and to create them anew in Christ, by giving to them repentance unto life, and a lively faith in Christ. The Gospel comes to the elect of God, not only in word, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in such assurance, that they receive it with joy of the Holy Ghost, 1 Thess. i. 5. 6. "The gospel is the ministration of the Spirit, that giveth life," 2 Cor. iii. 6-8. "It is mighty through God," 2 Cor. x. 4. It depends not at all upon the power of our free will, to make it successful for our conversion; but it conveys into the soul that life and power whereby we receive and obey it. Christ can make those that are dead in sin to hear His voice, and live, John v. 25. Therefore, He can speak to them by His Gospel, and command them to repent and believe with good success, as well as he could say to dead carcasses, *Talitha cumi*, Mark v. 41; "Lazarus, come forth," John xi. 43, 44; and to the sick of the palsy, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thine house," Matt. ix. 6.

Ninthly, There is no reason that the examples of heathen philosophers, or any Jews, or Christians by outward profession, that have lived without the saving knowledge of God in Christ, should move us by their wise sayings and renowned attainments, in the practice

of devotion and morality, to recede from this truth, that has been so fully confirmed out of the Holy Scriptures. Have we not cause to judge, that the apostle Paul, while he was a zealous Pharisee, and at least some few of the great multitude of the Jews in his time, that were zealous of the law, and had the instruction of the Holy Scriptures, attained as near to that true holiness as the heathen philosophers, or any others in their natural state? Yet Paul, after he was enlightened with the saving knowledge of Christ, judged himself the chief of sinners, in his highest former attainments; though, in the judgment of others, he was blameless touching the righteousness which is in the law; and he found it necessary to begin to live to God in a new way by faith in Christ, and to suffer the loss of all his former attainments, and to count them but dung, that he might win Christ, 1 Tim. i. 15, Phil. iii. 6, 7, 8.

And none of the great multitude of Jews that followed after the law of righteousness ever attained to it, while they fought it not by faith in Christ, Rom. ix. 31, 32. What performances are greater in outward appearance, than for a man to give all his goods to the poor, and to give his body to be burnt? and yet the Scripture allows us to suppose that this may be done without true charity, and therefore without any true holiness of the heart and life, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Men in a natural state may have strong convictions of the infinite power, wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, and of the judgment to come, and the everlasting happiness of the godly, and torments of the wicked; and these convictions may stir them up, not only to make a high profession, and to utter rare sayings concerning God and godliness; but also to labor with great earnestness to avoid all known sin, to subdue their lusts, to perform universal obedience to God in all known duties, and to serve Him with their lives and estates to the utmost, and to extort out

of their hearts some kind of love to God and godliness, that, if possible, they may escape the terrible torments of hell, and procure everlasting happiness by their endeavors: yet all their love to God is but forced and feigned; they have no hearty liking to God or His service; they account Him a hard master, and His commandments grievous, and they repine and fret inwardly at the burden of them; and, were it not for fear of everlasting fire, they would little regard the enjoyment of God in heaven; and they would be glad if they might have the liberty to enjoy their lust without danger of damnation. The highest preferment of those that are born only after the flesh in Abraham's family, is but to be children of the bond-woman, Gal. iv. 23. And though they toil more in God's service, than many of his dear children, yet God accepts not their service, because their best performances are slavish, without any child-like affections towards God, and no better than glittering sins. And yet these natural men are not at all beholden to the goodness of their natures for these counterfeit shows of holiness, or for the least abstaining from the grossest sin. If God should leave men fully to their own natural corruptions, and to the power of Satan, (as they deserve,) all show of religion and morality would be quickly banished out of the world, and we should grow past feeling in wickedness, and like to the cannibals, who are as good by nature as ourselves. But God, who can restrain the burning of the fiery furnace without quenching it, and the flowing of water without changing its nature, also restrains the working of natural corruption without mortifying it; and, through the greatness of His wisdom and power, makes his enemies to yield feigned obedience to Him, Ps. lxvi. 3, and to do many things good for the matter of them, though they can do nothing in a right, holy manner. He has appointed several means to restrain our corruptions; as the law, terrors of conscience, terrible judgments and rewards in this

life, magistrates, human laws, labor for necessities, as food and raiment. And those gospel means that are effectual for sanctification, serve also for restraint of sin. God has gracious ends in this restraint of sin, that His Church may be preserved, and His Gospel preached in the world; and that these natural men may be in a better capacity to receive the instructions of the Gospel; and that such of them as are chosen, may, in due time, be converted: and that those of them that are not truly converted, may enjoy more of the goodness of God here, and suffer the less torments hereafter. As vile and wicked as the world is, we have cause to praise, and to magnify the free goodness of God, that it is no worse.

DIRECTION VI.

Those that endeavor to perform sincere obedience to all the commands of Christ, as the condition whereby they are to procure for themselves a right and title to salvation, and a good ground to trust on Him for the same, seek their salvation by the works of the law, and not by the faith of Christ, as He is revealed in the Gospel; and they shall never be able to perform sincerely any true, holy obedience by all such endeavors.

EXPLICATION.

FOR the understanding the terms of this direction, note here, that I take salvation as comprehending justification, as well as other saving benefits; and sincere obedience as comprehending holy resolutions, as well as the fulfilling of them. The most of men, that have any sense of religion, are prone to imagine, that the sure way to establish the practice of holiness and righteousness, is to make it the procuring condition of the favor of God, and all happiness. This may appear by the

various false religions that have prevailed most in the world. In this way the heathens were brought to their best devotion and morality, by the knowledge of the judgment of God that those that violate several of the great duties to God and their neighbor, are worthy of death; and by their consciences accusing or excusing them, according to the practice of them, Rom. i. 32, and ii. 14, 15. Our consciences are informed by the common light of natural reason, that it is just in God to require us to perform these duties, that we may avoid His wrath, and enjoy His favor. And we cannot find any better way than this to obtain happiness, or to stir up ourselves to duty, without divine revelation. Yet, because our own consciences testify, that we often fail in the performance of those duties, we are inclined by self-love to persuade ourselves, that our sincere endeavors to do the best we can, shall be sufficient to procure the favor of God, and pardon for all our failings. Thus we see, that our persuasion of salvation by the condition of sincere obedience, has its original from our corrupt natural reason, and is part of the wisdom of this world. It is none of "the wisdom of God in a mystery, that hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world to our glory:" it is none of those things of the Spirit of God, which "have not entered into the heart of man," and which the "natural man cannot receive; for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7, 9, 14. It is none of "the foolishness of preaching, whereby it pleased God to save them that believe," 1 Cor. i. 21. And though we have a better way revealed to us in the Gospel, for the enjoyment of the favor of God, and holiness itself, and all salvation, without any procuring condition of works, by the free gift of God's grace through faith in Christ; yet it is very difficult to persuade men out of a way they are naturally addicted to, and that has forestalled and captivated their judg-

ments, and is bred in their bone, and therefore cannot easily be gotten out of the flesh. Most of those that live under the hearing and profession of the Gospel, are not brought to hate sin as sin, and to love godliness for itself, though they be convinced of the necessity of it to salvation; and therefore they cannot love it heartily. The only means they can take to bring themselves to it, is, to stir up themselves to a hypocritical practice in their old natural way, that they may avoid hell, and get heaven by their works. And their own consciences witness, that the zeal and love that they have for God and godliness, their self-denial, sorrow for sin, strictness of life, are in a manner forced and extorted from them by slavish fear and mercenary hope; so that they are afraid, that, if they should trust on Christ for salvation by free grace without works, the fire of their zeal and devotion would be quickly extinguished, and they would grow careless in religion, and let loose the reins to their lusts, and bring certain damnation upon themselves.

This moves them to account them the only Boanergesses and powerful preachers, who preach little or none of the doctrine of free grace, but rather spend their pains in rebuking sin, and urging people to get Christ and His salvation by their works, and thundering hell and damnation against sinners. It has been further observed, that some that have contended much for salvation by free grace, without any condition of works, have fallen into Antinomian opinions, and licentious practices. The experience of these things has much prevailed with some learned and zealous men, of late, among ourselves, to recede from the doctrine of justification by faith, without works, formerly professed unanimously, and strongly defended by the Protestants against the Papists, as a principal article of true religion. They have persuaded themselves that such a way of justification is ineffectual, yea, destructive to sanctification; and that the practice of sincere obedi-

ence cannot be established against Antinomian dotages and prevailing lusts, except it be made the necessary condition of our justification, and so of our eternal salvation. Therefore they conclude, that God has certainly made sincere obedience to be the condition of our salvation. And they have endeavored to new-model the Protestant doctrine, and to interpret the Holy Scriptures in a way agreeable and subservient to this their only sure foundation of holiness.

But I hope to show that this their imagined sure foundation of holiness was never laid by the holy God ; but that it is rather an error in the foundation, pernicious to the true faith, and to holiness of life. I account it an error especially to be abhorred and detested, because we are so prone to be seduced by it, and because it is an error whereby Satan, transforming himself into an angel of light, and a patron of holiness, has greatly withstood the Gospel in the Apostles' times, and stirred up men to persecute it out of zeal for the law : and has since prevailed to set up and maintain Popery, whereby the mystery of iniquity works apace in these days, to corrupt the purity of the Gospel among Protestants, and to heal the deadly wound that was given to Popery by preaching the doctrine of justification by faith without works.

One thing asserted in the direction against this fundamental error, is, that it is *a way of salvation by the works of the law*, and not by the faith of Christ, as revealed in the Gospel ; though the maintainers of it would have us believe, that it is the only way of the Gospel ; that so we may not doubt of its power and efficacy for our justification, sanctification, and our whole salvation. Their reasons are, because the law, as a covenant of works, requires us to do all its commandments perfectly, that we may live ; whereas, they plead only for a milder condition of sincere doing, that we may live. And they plead not for doing duties, as

obliged thereunto by the authority of the law given of God by Moses, but only in obedience to the commands of Christ in the Gospel. Neither do they plead for salvation by sincere obedience without Christ, but only by Christ, and through His merit and righteousness. And they acknowledge that both salvation itself, and sincere obedience, are given to them freely by the grace of Christ; so that all is of grace. They acknowledge also, that their salvation is by faith, because sincere obedience is wrought in them by believing the Gospel, and is included in the nature of that faith, which is the entire condition of our salvation; and some call it the resignating act of faith. But all these reasons are but a fallacious mask upon a legal way of salvation, to make it look like pure Gospel; as I shall evince by the following particulars.

First, All that seek salvation by the sincere performance of good works, as the procuring condition, are condemned by the Apostle Paul, for seeking righteousness by the works of the law, and not by faith, Rom. ix. 32, and for seeking to be justified by the law, and falling from the grace of Christ, Gal. v. 4. This one assertion, if it can be proved, is enough to pluck off the fallacious mask from the condition of sincere obedience, and to make men abhor it as a damning legal doctrine, that bereaves its followers of all salvation by Christ. And the proof of it is not difficult to persons that carefully consider a point of so great moment for their salvation. The Jews and Judaizing Christians, against whom the Apostle chiefly disputed in his whole controversy, did not possess any hope of being justified by perfect obedience, according to the rigor of the law, but only by such obedience as they accounted to be sincere, and not hypocritical. And we have no cause to doubt, but that the Judaizing Galatians had learned by the Gospel to distinguish sincere obedience from hypocrisy. The Jewish religion bound all that professed it, to acknowledge themselves

to be sinners ; as appears by their anniversary humiliation on the day of atonement, and several other rites of the law, and many clear testimonies in the oracles of God, that were committed to them, Ps. cxliii. 2, Prov. x. 9, Eccl. vii. 20. Yet they knew they were bound to turn to the Lord with all their hearts, in sincerity and uprightness, and that God would accept of sincere obedience ; for which cause they might better put it for the condition of the law, than we can of the Gospel, Ps. li. 6, 10, Deut. vi. 5, and xxx. 10. So that, if the Apostle had disputed against those that held only perfect obedience to be the condition of justification, he had contended with his own shadow. And they might as readily judge sincere obedience to be the condition of justification under the law, as we can judge it to be the condition under the Gospel. Neither does the Apostle condemn them merely for accounting sincere obedience to the law as given by Moses, to be the condition of their justification ; but, more generally, for seeking salvation by their own works. And he alleges against them, that Abraham, who lived before the law of Moses, was not justified by any of his works, though he performed sincere obedience ; and that David, who lived under the law of Moses, was not justified by his works, though he performed sincere obedience, and was as much bound to obey the law given by Moses, as we are to obey any commands of Christ in the Gospel, Rom. iv. 2, 3, 5, 6. Neither does he condemn them for seeking their salvation only by works, without respecting at all the grace and salvation that is by Christ ; for the Judaizing Galatians were yet professors of the grace and salvation of Christ, though they thought obedience to the law a necessary condition for the partaking of it, as also many other Judaizing believers did. And, doubtless, they accounted themselves obliged thereunto, not only by the authority of Moses but of Christ also, whom they owned as their Lord and Saviour. And we may be sure it was no damning error, to account Moses'

law obliging at that time ; for many thousands of the Jews, that were found believers, held the ceremonies of Moses to be in force at that time ; and Paul was tender towards them in it, Acts xxi. 20, 26, and xv. 5. And other Jews sought justification, not only by their sincere works, but also by trusting on the promise made to Abraham, and on their priesthood and sacrifices ; which were types of Christ. And the most legal Pharisees would thank God for their works, as proceeding from His grace, Luke xviii. 11. And they could as well acknowledge their salvation to be by faith, as the asserters of salvation by sincere obedience can in these days : for they accounted, that their sincere obedience was wrought in them by believing the word of God which contained gospel as well as legal doctrine in it ; and therefore it must be included in the nature of faith, if faith were taken for the condition of their whole salvation. Let the asserters of the condition of sincere obedience learn from hence that they are building again that Judaism which the Apostle Paul destroyed, whereby the Jews stumbled at Christ, Rom. ix. 32, and the Galatians were in danger of falling from Christ and grace, Gal. v. 2, 4 ; and let them beware of falling under that curse which he has denounced, on this very occasion, against any man or angel that shall preach any other Gospel than that which he has preached, Gal. i. 8, 9.

Secondly, The difference between the law and Gospel does not at all consist in this, that the one requires perfect doing, the other only sincere doing ; but, in this, that the one requires doing, the other not doing, but believing for life and salvation. Their terms are different, not only in degree, but in their whole nature.

The Apostle Paul opposes the believing required in the Gospel, to all doing for life, as the condition proper to the law, Gal. iii. 12. “ The law is not of faith : but the man that doth them, shall live in them.” Rom. iv. 5. “ To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him

that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." If we seek salvation by ever so easy and mild a condition of works, we thereby bring ourselves under the terms of the law, and become debtors to fulfil the whole law in perfection, though we intended to engage ourselves only to fulfil it in part, Gal. v. 3 ; for the law is a complete declaration of the only terms whereby God will judge all that are not brought to despair of procuring salvation by any of their own works, and to receive it as a gift freely given to them by the grace of God in Christ. So that all that seek salvation, right or wrong, knowingly or ignorantly, by any works, less or more, whether invented by their own superstition, or commanded by God in the Old or New Testament, shall at last stand or fall according to those terms.

Thirdly, Sincere obedience cannot be performed to all the commands of Christ in the Gospel, except it be also performed to the moral law, as given by Moses, and as obliging us by that authority. Some asserters of the condition of salvation by sincere obedience to the commands of Christ, would fain be free from the authority of the law of Moses, because that justifies none, but thunders out a curse against all those that seek salvation by the works of it, Gal. iii. 10, 11. But, if they were at all justified by sincere works, their respect to Moses' authority would not hinder their success ; for many, that were good Christians, accounted themselves bound to obey, not only the moral, but the ceremonial law ; and, if they had sought justification by any works, they would have sought it by those, Acts xx. 20, 21. They knew not of any justification by sincere works, as commanded only in the Gospel ; yet, if they had erred in anything absolutely necessary to salvation, the Apostles would not have tolerated their weakness. And, whether they will or no, they must seek their salvation by the works of the moral law, as given by Moses, or else they can never get it by

sincere obedience to the commands of Christ. Christ never loved their new condition so well, as to abolish the Mosaical authority of the moral law, for the establishment of it. He came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them, in the practice required by them: and has declared, that "those that break one of the least of these commandments, and teach men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. v. 17, 19. He commands us to "do to men whatsoever we would they should do to us, because this is the law and the prophets;" which is sufficient to prove, that He would have us to account the law authoritative to oblige us in this matter. He requires his disciples to observe and do whatsoever the Scribes and Pharisees bid them, because they sat in Moses' seat, Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.

And, to come to the point in hand, when Christ had occasion to answer the questions of those that were guilty of the same error that I am now dealing with, in seeking salvation by their own works, He showed them that they must obey the commands as they were already established by the Mosaical authority, in the Scripture of the Old Testament: "What is written? how readest thou? This do, and thou shalt live," Luke v. 26, 28. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments; which are, Thou shalt do no murder; Thou shalt not commit adultery," &c.

In like manner, the Apostles of Christ urged the performance of moral duties upon believers, by the authority of the law given by Moses. The Apostle Paul exhorts to "love one another, because he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law," Rom. xiii. 8; and to "honor our father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise," Eph. vi. 2. The Apostle John exhorts to love others, as no new, but an old commandment. The Apostle James exhorts "to fulfil

the royal law according to the Scripture: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and to keep all the commandments of the law, one as well as another, because He that said, "Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill," James ii. 8, 10, 11. Sound Protestants have accounted the denial of the authority of the moral law of Moses to be an Antinomian error. And though our late prevaricators against Antinomianism maintain not this error, yet they establish a worse error, justification by their sincere Gospel works. I think the denomination of the Antinomians arose from this error. The law of Moses had its authority at first from Christ; for Christ was the Lord God of Israel, that ordained the law by angels on Mount Sinai, in the hand of Moses, a mediator for the Israelites, who were then His only Church, and with whom we believing Gentiles are now joined, as fellow-members of one and the same body, Eph. iii. 6. And though Christ has since abrogated some of the commandments then given by Moses, concerning figurative ceremonies and judicial proceedings, yet he Has not annulled the obligatory authority of the moral law, but has left it in its full force, to oblige in moral duties, that still are to be practised; as, when some acts of any parliament are repealed, the authority of the same parliament remains inviolable in other acts that are not repealed. I know they object, that the ten commands of the moral law, the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones, are also done away by Christ, 2 Cor. iii. 7. But this makes altogether against their conditional covenant: for they are the ministration of death, and are done away, not as they commanded perfect obedience, for even Christ Himself commands us to be perfect, Matt. v. 48; but as they were conditions for procuring life, and avoiding death, established by a promise of life to the doers, and a curse to the breakers of them, Gal. iii. 10, 12. The covenant made with Israel on Mount Sinai, is abolished by Christ, the Mediator of

the new covenant, Heb. viii. 8, 9, 13. And the ten commandments bind us not as they were words of that covenant, Exod. xxxiv. 28. I mean they bind us not as conditions of that covenant, except we seek to be justified by works; for the law, as a covenant, still stands in force enough to curse those that seek salvation by their own works, Gal. iii. 10; and, if abolished, it is only to those that are in Christ by faith, Gal. ii. 19, 20, Acts iii. 22-25, and xv. 10, 11. But the ten commandments bind us still, as they were then given to a people that were at that time under the covenant of grace made with Abraham, to show them what duties are holy, just, and good, well-pleasing to God, and to be a rule for their conversation. The result of all is, that we must still practise moral duties as commanded by Moses; but we must not seek to be justified by our practice. If we use them as a rule of life, not as conditions of justification, they can be no ministration of death, or killing letter unto us. Their perfection indeed makes them harder terms to procure life by, but a better rule to discover all imperfections, and to guide us to that perfection which we should aim at. And it will be our wisdom, not to part with the authority of the decalogue of Moses, until our new divines can furnish us with another system of morality as complete as that, and as excellently composed and ordered by the wisdom of God, and more authentic than that is.

Fourthly, Those that endeavor to procure Christ's salvation by their sincere obedience to all the commands of Christ, act contrary to that way of salvation by Christ, free grace, and faith, discovered in the Gospel, though they own it in profession ever so highly.

1. They act contrary to the way of salvation by Christ, for they would heal themselves, and save themselves from the power and pollution of sin, and procure God's favor, by performing sincere obedience, before they are come to Christ the only physician and Saviour. They lay their own obedience lowest in the

foundation of their salvation, and build the enjoyment of Christ upon it; who ought to be the only foundation. They would sanctify themselves, before they have a sure interest in Christ; and, "going about to establish their own righteousness, they do not submit themselves to the righteousness of God in Christ," Rom. x. 3, 4. Sometimes they will call the righteousness of Christ their legal righteousness, that they may make room for an evangelical righteousness of their own works, to be the immediate procuring cause of their justification by Christ; whereas, the Apostle Paul knew no evangelical righteousness but that of Christ, which he called "the righteousness of faith without the law," Rom. iii. 21, 22, and not of the law, Phil. iii. 9. Thus they make void Christ's salvation while they pretend to own it, and Christ profits them nothing. Christ is become of none effect to them, while they would be justified by the law, Gal. v. 2, 4. If we would be saved by Christ, we must own ourselves dead, lost sinners, that can have no righteousness for justification but His, no life or ability to do good, until God bring us into union and fellowship with Him.

2. They also act contrary to salvation by grace according to the true meaning of the Gospel. For we are not saved by grace, as the supreme cause of salvation by the intervention of works, given and accepted by grace as the procuring cause; in which sense we might be saved by grace, though by a covenant of works; as a servant that has money given him by his master, to purchase an annuity for his master at a low rate, may profess that he had an annuity given him freely, and yet that he has purchased it, and may claim it as a due debt. But we are saved by grace, as the immediate and complete cause of our whole salvation, excluding procurement of our salvation by the condition of works, and claiming it by any law as a due debt. The Scripture teaches us, that there is a perfect opposition and utter irreconcilableness between

salvation by grace and works : " If by grace, then it is no more of works ; otherwise grace is no more grace : but, if it be of works, then it is no more grace ; otherwise work is no more work," Rom. xi. 6. So also there is an opposition between a reward reckoned of grace, and of debt, Rom. iv. 4 ; between a promise of happiness by the law and by grace, Rom. iv. 13, 16. God is so jealous of the glory of His free grace, that He will not save us by any works, though of His own working in us, lest any man should boast, Eph. ii. 9. He knows when He heals men by physic, or maintains them by the labor of their hands, that they are prone to attribute the glory, rather to the means they use, than to His sole bounty and goodness.

3. They do also exactly contrary to the way of salvation by faith : for, as I have showed already, the faith which is required for our salvation in the Gospel, is to be understood, in a sense contrary to doing good works, as a condition to procure our salvation ; and so the true difference between the terms of the law and of the Gospel may be maintained. Believing is opposed to all working for salvation, and the " law of works to the law of faith," Rom. iv. 5, and iii. 27, Eph. ii. 8, 9. Therefore we must not here consider faith as a work of righteousness ; as comprehending any works of righteousness performed or done ; as a condition to procure a right and title to Christ ; as the hand whereby we work, to earn Him as our bread and drink, as our wages ; but only as the hand whereby we receive Christ, as freely given to us, or as the mouth whereby we eat and drink Him ; as has been proved. God gives a sufficient right to receive Christ and His salvation, by the free Gospel offer and invitation ; so that He leaves nothing for our faith to do but to lay hold of Him as a free gift, that the glory of our salvation may not be ascribed at all to our faith or works, but only to this free grace of God in Christ ; " It is of faith that it may be by grace," Rom. iv. 16.

Fifthly, Christ, or His Apostles, never taught a Gospel that requires such a condition of works for salvation as they plead. The texts of Scripture which they usually allege for their purpose, are either contrary to it, or widely distant from it, as they might learn from many Protestant interpreters, if their affection to a Popish tenet had not blinded them. I shall instance briefly only a few of those texts, whereby you may have some light to judge of the true meaning of the rest. That obedience of faith, mentioned by the Apostle Paul, as the great design of Gospel preaching, Rom. i. 5, is as contrary to their condition of sincere obedience for salvation, as the law of faith is to the law of works, Rom. iii. 23. It is an obedience that consists in believing the report of the Gospel; as the Apostle explains himself, Rom. x. 16. They have not all obeyed the Gospel; for Esaias saith, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" Faith is to be imputed for righteousness, not because it is a work of righteousness itself, but because we do by it renounce all confidence in any righteous works whatsoever, and trust on Him who justifies the ungodly; as is clear by that very text which they usually pervert for their purpose, Rom. iv. 5. They grossly pervert those words of Paul, Rom. ii. 6, 7, "Who will render to every man according to his deeds; to them, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life;" where they will have Paul to be declaring the terms of the Gospel, when he is evidently declaring the terms of the law, to prove, that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, and that no flesh can be justified by the works of the law, as appears by the tenor of his following discourse, Rom. iii. 9, 10. They join evidently with the Papists against the concurrent judgment of the best Protestant divines in the interpretation of that text, James ii. 24, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only," where they will have James to deliver the doctrine of justifi-

cation in more proper expressions than the Apostle Paul, who teaches justification by faith without works ; though Paul treated on this doctrine as his principal subject, and James only speaks of it occasionally, as a motive to the practice of good works ; whereby we may easily judge which of their expressions are to be taken for the most proper. Protestants have showed sufficiently, that James speaks not of a true saving faith, but of such a dead faith as devils have ; not of justification in a proper sense, but of the declaration and manifestation of it by its fruits. Besides, he speaks of justification by works, as commanded in the law given by Moses ; as appears by his citing the commandments of the law, ver. 8, 11, which our contrivers of the new divinity would have nothing to do with in their model of the doctrine of justification. Another text alleged by them, is, Rev. xxii. 14, “Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” But the Greek word which is here translated *right*, is translated *power* or *privilege*, John i. 12. It signifies here a *rightful possession* of the fruit of the tree of life, and not a mere title to it. So this text proves no more than what the Protestants generally acknowledge, that good works are the way wherein we are to walk to the enjoyment and possession of the glory of Christ ; though a title to Christ, and his glorious salvation, be freely given us without any procuring condition of works. They account also, that when the happiness of heaven is called a reward, it must needs imply a procuring condition of works, as Rev. xxii. 12, Matt. v. 12. But though it be called a reward, because it is given after the doing of good works, and because it recompenses good works, better than any wages on earth can recompense the laborer ; yet it is a reward of grace, not of debt, Rom. iv. 4 ; it is no proper wages, but a free gift, Rom. vi. 24 : “For the wages

of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Another thing asserted in the direction, is, that those who endeavor to perform this sincere obedience, as the condition to procure a right and title to Christ and His salvation, shall never be able to perform sincerely any true obedience by all such endeavors. Though they labor earnestly, and pray fervently, fast frequently, and oblige themselves to holiness by many vows, and press themselves to the practice of it by the most forcible motives, taken from the infinite power, justice, and knowledge of God, the equity and goodness of His commands, the salvation of Christ, everlasting happiness and misery, or any other motive improved by the most affectionate meditation; yet they shall never attain to the end which they aim at in such an erroneous way. They may restrain their corruptions, and bring themselves to many hypocritical, slavish performances, whereby they may be esteemed among men as eminent saints; but they shall not be able to mortify one corruption, or to perform one duty in such a holy manner as God approves. Yet here I censure only an error, not the life of the persons that maintain it. I have heard that some preach legally, and pray evangelically. I doubt not but the frame of their hearts and lives is rather according to their prayers than their sermons. Though Peter complied with Judaism in an outward act of profession, yet he lived himself like a Christian, Gal. ii. 11, 14. I affirm only, that no godly person did or could attain to his godliness in this erroneous way. And what a lamentable disappointment this to those that have attempted to alter the Protestant doctrine, and to pervert and confound law and Gospel, and have bred much contention in the Church, that they might secure the practice of sincere obedience against Antinomian errors, by making it the procuring condition of their salvation; when, after all this ado,

the remedy is found to be as bad as the disease, equally unserviceable and destructive to that great end for which they designed it; and that it has an Antinomian effect and operation, contrary to the power of godliness!

Much more might be said for the confutation of this novel doctrine; but, if this one thing be well proved, it may be sufficient to make the zealous contrivers of it ashamed of their craft, and angry with themselves, and sorry, that they have taken so much pains, and stretched their wits, to maintain such an unprofitable, unsanctifying opinion. It will be sufficient for the proof of it, if I show, that the practice of true holiness cannot possibly be attained by seeking to be saved by the works of the law; because I have already proved, that this doctrine of salvation by sincere obedience, is according to the terms of the law, and not of the Gospel. And hereby those also may see their error, that ascribe justification only to the Gospel, and sanctification to the law. Yet, because those asserters of the condition of sincere obedience will hardly be persuaded by what has been said, that it is the way of the law of works; I shall, for their more full conviction, sufficiently manifest, that it is of no other nature and operation than any other doctrine that is proper to the law, and has no better fruit; as I proceed to prove, by the following arguments, that holiness cannot be attained by seeking it by the law of works, that so it may appear not worthy to be called Gospel doctrine.

First, The way of salvation by the works of the law is contrary and destructive to those necessary means of a holy practice that have been laid down in the foregoing directions, and manifestly proved out of the Holy Scriptures. I have made it appear, that a hearty propensity to a holy practice cannot be attained without some good persuasion of our reconciliation with God by justification, and of our everlasting happiness, and of sufficient strength both to will and to perform

our duty; and that these and all other endowments necessary to the same end, are to be had only in Christ, by union and fellowship with Him; and that Christ Himself, with all His fulness, is united to us by faith, which is not a condition to procure a right or title to Christ, but an instrument whereby we receive Him actually in our hearts, by trusting on Him for all salvation freely promised to us in the Gospel. All these means of a holy practice, are things wherein our spiritual life and happiness consist; so that, if we have them, everlasting life is begun in us already; and because they are the necessary means of a holy practice, therefore the beginning of everlasting life in us must not be placed after such a practice, as the fruit and consequence of it; but must go before it, as the cause before the effect. Now, the terms of the law are directly contrary to this method. They place the practice of holiness before life, and make it to be the means and procuring cause of life; as Paul describes them, Rom. x. 5, "The man that doeth these things, shall live by them." By these terms, you are first to do the holy duties commanded, before you have any interest in the life promised, or any right to lay hold of it as yours by faith. And you must practise holiness without the before-mentioned means, or else you can never attain to them. Thus the true means are turned out of their office; and instead of being causes, they are made to be effects and fruits of a holy practice. And it will be in vain ever to expect such effects, and fruits; for holiness itself with all its effects, must needs be destroyed, when its necessary causes are taken away. Therefore the Apostle Paul testifies, that the way of salvation by the works of the law makes faith void, and the promises of none effect; and frustrates the grace of God, as if Christ died in vain; and makes Christ to be of no profit, and of none effect to us, as those that are fallen from grace, Rom. iv. 14, Gal. ii. 21, and v. 2, 4. Let us now examine the modern doc-

trine of salvation by the condition of sincere obedience to all the commands of Christ, and we shall quick'y find it to be a chip of the same block with the former legal way of salvation, in the same manner destructive to the means of holiness, and to holiness itself. It requires of us the performance of sincere obedience, before we have the means necessary to produce it, by making it antecedent to our justification and persuasion of eternal happiness, and our actual enjoyment of union and fellowship with Christ, and of that new nature which is to be had only in Him by faith. It destroys the nature of that saving faith whereby we actually receive and enjoy Christ and all His benefits, and knocks off our hands from laying hold of Christ and His salvation, by telling us still, as Christ told the legal worker after all his labor, that yet we lack something, Mark x. 21; that it is presumption to take Him as our own, until we have performed the condition for our right and title to Him; which is another kind of saving faith, otherwise called sincere obedience. By this devised conditional faith, Satan keeps many poor souls at bay, poring upon their own hearts for many years together, to find whether they have performed the condition, and whether they have as yet any right to Christ for their salvation, not daring to venture to take Him as their own. It is a strong partition wall, that will certainly hinder the soul from coming to Christ, until it be thrown down by the knowledge of salvation by grace, without any procuring condition of works. And though it be accounted but as the payment of a peppercorn for a great estate, yet it is enough to break the ablest man in the world, because it debars him from laying hold of the only effectual means of holiness, whereby that peppercorn may be obtained.

Secondly, Those that seek salvation by the works of the law, therein act according to their natural state. They live and walk according to the flesh, or old man;

not according to the new state, by Christ living in them. I doubt not but several of them that live under the light of the Gospel, are partakers of a new state in Christ; and walk holily in it; but the best in this world have in them flesh as well as spirit, and may act according to either state in some measure; and in this matter they do act only according to their carnal natural state. When the believing Galatians were seduced to a legal way of salvation, the Apostle Paul charges it upon them as their folly, that, having begun in the Spirit, they would now be "made perfect in the flesh," Gal. iii. 3. And he resembles those that desire to be under the law, to Abraham's son born of Hagar the bond-woman, to show, that such walk as those that "are born after the flesh, not after the Spirit," Gal. iv. 19, 23, 29. The law was first given to Adam in his pure natural state, to prescribe terms for his continuance in the happiness which he then enjoyed. And, ever since that time, the flesh, or natural man, is married to the law, and the "law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth," that is, until he be dead to his fleshly state by the body of Christ, and married to Him that is raised from the dead, Rom. vii. 1, 4. We are not at all under the law as a covenant of works, according to our new state in Christ; as the Apostle testifies, Rom. vi. 14: "Ye are not under the law, but under grace;" and Gal. v. 18, "If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." From hence we may firmly conclude, that none can possibly attain to true godliness by acting according to legal terms; because I have fully proved already, that it is impossible to be godly, while we are in the flesh, or in a natural state, and that, as far as we act according to it, we can do nothing but sin. The law is weak through the flesh, that it cannot bring us to fulfil its own righteousness, Rom. viii. 3, 4. It is married to a cross piece of flesh, that is enmity to it, and can never be subject to it, Rom. viii. 8. It sues the natural man for an old

debt of obedience, that he is utterly unable to pay since the fall; and the success accordingly; it gets nothing. Neither do those take a better course, that would bring themselves to holiness, by making sincere obedience to Christ's commands the condition of their salvation. Their way is the same for substance with that of the Galatians before mentioned, who would be made perfect in the flesh, not by perfect obedience, but sincere; as has been showed before. Their endeavors to procure an interest in Christ by their sincere obedience, testify against themselves, that they do not act as people that are in Christ, but rather as people that judge themselves to be without an interest in Christ, and to be yet to seek for it. And sincere obedience is as impossible to be attained as perfect obedience, if we act according to our dead natural state.

Thirdly, As the law bereaves us of all strengthening means, that are to be had by faith in Christ, and finds us without strength in our natural state; so of itself, it affords us no strength to fulfil its own commands: "If there had been a law given that could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law," Gal. iii. 21. It does not so much as promise life, until we have performed the obedience required by it. "The man that doeth these things, shall live by them," Rom. x. 5. It is well called a voice of words, Heb. xii. 19; because its high and big words are not accompanied with an enlivening power. And the doctrine of life and salvation by sincere obedience is no better natured, or more bountiful to us; for it exacts of us the performance of the condition before it allows us any life or salvation by Christ. Can any man rationally expect strength to obey sincerely, by following a doctrine that does not so much as promise it? The true Gospel is of a more benign nature; for it promises, that "God will pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh," Acts ii. 17; and will put His laws into our mind,

and write them into our hearts, Heb. viii. 10 ; and will cause us to "walk in His statutes that we shall keep His judgments, and do them," Ezek. xxxvi. 27. The word of God's grace, that requires not holiness of us as a condition, but promises it to us as a free gift, must needs be the only doctrine "that is able to build us up, and to give us an inheritance among them that are sanctified," Acts xx. 32. Seeing it pleases God to bring us to holiness by believing a doctrine we may reasonably expect that God should work upon us suitably to the nature of the doctrine which we believe ; that he should give by a giving doctrine, and exact by an exacting doctrine.

Fourthly, The way of procuring life and happiness by the condition of perfect or sincere works, is not a rational method for the recovery of fallen man ; though it were good for the preserving of life before the fall for it prescribes the immediate practice of holiness to recover a man dead in sin ; as if one should say to the sick of the palsy, "Arise and walk, and then thou shalt be whole, and able to walk." We sometimes say jestingly to a child that is fallen on the ground, "Come hither and I will help thee up ;" but if we should say so to one that is cast on his bed by a dead palsy, we should be guilty of mocking and cruelly insulting the afflicted. Those that are humbled and made sensible of their original sin, and natural deadness, know that they must first live by the Spirit before they can act holily, Gal. v. 25. They will inquire : "How shall we have strength to perform the duty required ?" If you answer, that they must trust in God and Christ, to help them ; they may readily reply, they have no sure ground to trust on God or Christ for any saving grace, according to this doctrine, before they have performed this condition, at least in a sincere resolution of obedience, and that they are as unable to bring their hearts to such a resolution, as a dead man is to raise himself out of the grave. Take another instance. The method of

the doctrine of works is, You must love God first, and then on that condition He will love you again ; whereas, on the contrary, “ we love God, because He loved us first,” 1 John iv. 19. And if God suspend His love to us upon any condition, our love to Him will not be absolute, but suspended upon the same condition, and no way contrary to an actual hating of Him.

Fifthly, The law is so far from healing our sinful corruption, that it proves rather an occasion of sinful motions and actings in those that seek salvation by the works of it. This comes to pass by reason of the power of our natural corruption ; which is stirred up and rages the more, when the holy and just law of God is set in opposition against it ; so that the fault is not in the law, but in our own hearts. Those that find not this by their own experience, should believe the Apostle Paul, who teaches it plainly, and that from his own experience, Rom. vii. 5, 14. He affirms, that there are motions of sin by the law, in a fleshly state ; and that sin, taking occasion by the commandment, “Thou shalt not covet,” wrought in him all manner of concupiscence, deceived him, slew him, became exceeding sinful ; and that without the law, he was alive, and sin dead ; but, when the commandment came, sin revived, and he died. He shows the cause of this irreconcilable enmity and contrariety between his sinful nature, and the law : “The law is spiritual ; but I am carnal, sold under sin.” Take notice here, from the reason given by the Apostle, that the doctrine of salvation by sincere obedience will have the same event. Corrupt nature is contrary to sincere, as well as perfect obedience ; and, if we make it the condition of our salvation, sin will take the same occasion by it, to become exceeding sinful in its motions and actings. The success of legal doctrine upon the natural man is according to the proverb, “Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee,” Prov. ix. 8. Rebuking a madman, is the way to enrage him ; and such is the natural man

in spiritual things, since he fell out of his right mind by the sin of Adam. We find by manifold experience, that though men be generally addicted to the principle of salvation by works, yet multitudes of them hate all strict preachers and professors of true holiness, because they are a torment to their consciences. They endeavor to shelter themselves in ignorance of the law; accounting, that the less they know the less they shall answer for; and, therefore, they would not have right things prophesied unto them, Isa. xxx. 10. And they have prevailed generally in the world, to darken the natural knowledge of moral duties, in such a degree that there is a necessity of learning them by divine revelation out of the Scriptures. We may find how prone legal writers are to corrupt the sense of the law, that they may leave starting holes for their corruptions, by the corrupt glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, from which Christ vindicated it, Matt. v. And, as far as I have observed, none more endeavor to discover the purity and perfection of the law, than those who seek holiness and salvation, without any legal condition, by the mere free grace of God in Christ. The doctrine of salvation by sincere obedience, is but mincing the perfection required in the law; and yet how is this doctrine minced again and again, until it is become so small that the substance of all true obedience is lost! A willingness to be saved according to Christ's terms, or a consent that Christ should be our Lord, or a resolution to obey His commandments, (which is little more than ignorant men trust on, when they say, they hope God will save them, because they have a good meaning, though they live in the neglect of all religion,) without any further practice of holiness, shall pass with many for enough of sincere obedience, both to enter them into a state of salvation, and to continue them in it; so that they shall never be accounted breakers of the Gospel covenant, while so much can be pretended. The most that is made necessary for salvation, shall

be only, to endeavor to do what we can to obey Christ's commands; though all that the most can do, is nothing that is truly good. Those who have a little more zeal for their salvation by works, are prone to spend it in superstitious observances, because they suit better with their carnal nature, than the spiritual commands of God and Christ. I doubt not but this has been one occasion of the prevalence of heathenish, Jewish, and Popish superstitions in the world. We find, by experience, how Popery fell in several nations in late years, when the great pillar of it, the doctrine of justification by works, was overthrown by the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone. If these legal zealots be forced, by strong conviction, to endeavor the practice of spiritual duties, for the quieting of their guilty consciences, they may be brought to strive and labor earnestly, and even to macerate their bodies with fasting, that they may kill their lusts; but still their lusts are alive, and as strong as ever they were; and show forth their enmity against the law of God, by inward fretting, repining, and grudging at it, as a grievous task-master, though a slavish fear restrain their gross outward actings. And, if once these zealots be enlightened with the knowledge of the spiritual nature of the law, to discern that God rejects all their slavish service, and will not own it for sincere obedience; then they fall into despair of their salvation, because they see they have failed in their highest attempts to perform the condition; and then they can easily discover themselves, that their hearts swell in anger and manifest hatred against the law, yea, and against God and Christ, for prescribing such hard conditions of salvation, which they cannot keep, and yet must expect to be damned eternally for breaking them. This fills them with blasphemous thoughts against God and Christ, and they can hardly refrain from blaspheming with their tongues. And when they are brought to this horrible condition, if God does not in mercy discover

to them the way of salvation, by free grace, through faith alone, they will endeavor, if they can, to sear their consciences past feeling of sin, and fully to abandon all religion, which has proved such an insufferable torment to them; or, if they cannot sear their consciences, some of them are easily prevailed with by Satan, rather to murder themselves, than to live longer in the hatred of God, the spirit of blasphemy, and continual horror of conscience. This is the pestilent effect of legal doctrine upon a carnal heart, that but rouses up and terribly enrages the sleeping lion, our sinful corruption, instead of killing it; as is too evident by the sad experience of many that have endeavored with all their might to practise it, and by the Scripture, that shows a sufficient cause why it cannot be otherwise. Therefore, the doctrine of salvation by sincere obedience, that was invented against Antinomianism, may well be ranked among the worst Antinomian errors. For my part, I hate it with perfect hatred, and account it mine enemy, as I have found it to be. And I have found, by some good experience, the truth of the lesson taught by the Apostle, that the way to be freed from the mastery and dominion of sin, is, "not to be under the law, but under grace." Rom. vi. 14.

Sixthly, The way of salvation by works was blasted by the curse denounced against the first Adam's sin; so that now it cannot work life in us, or holiness, but only death; for the law which requires both sincere and perfect obedience to God in all things, was made known to Adam at his first creation, as the means of continuing the happy life that was then bestowed upon him; and it would have been effectual for this end, if he had not transgressed in the forbidden fruit. But, when he had once brought himself and his posterity under the terrible sentence, "Thou shalt surely die," Gen. ii. 17, all that knowledge of God, or His law, that before wrought for continuance of life, was turned by that cursing sentence the contrary way, to work for his

death, even for the death of his soul in sin, as well as for the death of his body; and therefore it quickly moved him to hide himself from God as an enemy. It was as if God should say, "All the light and knowledge that thou hast, shall not be able to continue thy life or restore it; but it shall rather tend to thy death." Therefore, while we continue in our natural state, under the first Adam's guilt and curse, the knowledge of the law, yea, and all such knowledge of God and His attributes as natural men may attain to, must needs be in like manner accursed to us. And seeing man did not use his natural knowledge and wisdom aright, God is resolved to revenge the abuse of it, by giving us salvation in a way contrary to it, that seems foolishness to the natural man; and wholly to abolish the way of living by any of our works, or by any wisdom or knowledge that the natural man can attain unto. "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? for, after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe," 1 Cor. i. 19, 20, 21. Hence we may conclude, that no truth known by the light of nature, can be an effectual principle or motive to work holiness in us; and Gospel principles and motives are but abused, when they are applied to a legal way of salvation.

Seventhly, The end which God aimed at in giving the law to Moses, was not, that any should ever attain to holiness or salvation by the condition of perfect or sincere obedience to it; though, if there had been any such way of salvation at that time, it must have consisted in the performance of that law, which was then given to the Church to be a rule of life, as well as a covenant. There was another covenant made before that time with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, a covenant of grace, promising all blessings freely through Christ,

the promised seed, by which only they were to be saved. And the covenant of the law was added, that they might see their sinfulness and subjection to death and wrath, and the impossibility of attaining to life or holiness by their works, and be forced to trust on the free promise only for all their salvation, and that sin might be restrained by the spirit of bondage, until the coming of that promised seed Jesus Christ, and the more plentiful pouring out of the sanctifying Spirit, by Him. This the Apostle Paul shows largely, Gal. iii. 15-24, Rom. v. 20, 21, and x. 3, 4. None of the Israelites under the Old Testament were ever saved by the Sinai covenant; neither did any of them ever attain to holiness by the terms of it. Some of them did indeed perform the commandments of it sincerely, though imperfectly; but those were first justified, and made partakers of life and holiness by virtue of that better covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which was the same in substance with the new covenant or testament established by the blood of Christ. Had it not been for that better covenant, the Sinai covenant would have proved to them an occasion of no happiness, but only of sin, despair, and destruction. Of itself it was only a killing letter, the ministration of death and condemnation; and therefore it is now abolished, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 8, 9, 11. We have cause to praise God, for delivering his Church by the blood of Christ from this yoke of bondage; and we have cause to abhor the device of those who would lay upon us a more grievous and terrible yoke, by turning our very new covenant into a covenant of sincere works, and leaving us no such better covenant, as the Israelites had under their yoke, to relieve us in our extremity.

DIRECTION VII.

We are not to imagine that our hearts and lives must be changed from sin to holiness in any measure, before we may safely venture to trust on Christ for the sure enjoyment of Himself, and His salvation.

EXPLICATION.

WE are naturally so prone to ground our salvation upon our own works, that, if we cannot make them procuring conditions and causes of our salvation by Christ, yet we endeavor at least to make them necessary preparatives to fit us for receiving Christ and His salvation by faith. And men are easily persuaded, that this is not at all contrary to salvation by free grace, because all that is hereby ascribed to our works, or good qualifications, is only, "that they put us in a fit posture to receive a free gift. If we were to go to a prince for a free gift, good manners and due reverence would teach us to trim ourselves first, and to change our slovenly clothes, as Joseph did when he came out of the dungeon into the presence of Pharaoh. It seems to be an impudent slighting and contemning the justice and holiness of God and Christ, and an insufferable affront and indignity offered to the divine Majesty, when any dare presume to approach His presence in the filthy garb of their sins, covered all over with putrefying sores, not at all closed, bound up or cleansed; much more, when they endeavor to receive the most holy One into such an abominable stinking kennel, as a sinner's heart is before it be at all reformed. The parable concerning the man that was to be bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness, for coming to the royal wedding without a wedding garment, seems to be intended as a warning against all such presumption," Matt. xxii. 11, 13. Many that be-

hold with terror the abominable filth of their own hearts, are kept off from coming immediately to Christ, by such imaginations, which Satan strongly maintains and increases in them by his suggestions ; so that they can by no means be persuaded out of them, until God teaches them inwardly by the powerful illumination of His Spirit. They delay the saving act of faith, because they think they are not yet duly prepared and qualified for it. On the same account, many weak believers delay coming to the Lord's Supper for many years together, even as long as they live in this world ; and would be as likely to delay their baptism, if they had not been baptized in infancy. Against all such imaginations, I shall propose the following considerations.

First, This error is pernicious to the practice of holiness, and to our whole salvation, in the same manner with that treated of in the foregoing direction, and may be confuted by the same arguments which are there produced. Whether holiness be made a procuring condition of our salvation through Christ, or only a condition necessary to qualify us for the reception of Christ, we are equally brought under those legal terms of doing first the duties required in the law, that so we may live. Therefore, we are equally bereaved of the assistance of those means of holiness mentioned in the foregoing directions, as union and fellowship with Christ, and the enjoyment of all His sanctifying endowments by faith, which should go before the practice of holiness, that they may enable us for it ; and we are equally left to labor in vain for holiness, while we are in our cursed natural state, whereby our sinful corruption will be rather exasperated than mortified ; so that we shall never be duly prepared for the reception of Christ as long as we live in the world. Thus, while we endeavor to prepare our way to Christ by holy qualifications, we rather fill it with stumbling-blocks and deep pits, whereby our souls are hindered from ever attaining to the salvation of Christ.

Secondly, Any the least change of our hearts and lives from sin to holiness, before our receiving of Christ and his salvation by faith, is not at all necessary, according to the terms of the Gospel, nor required in the word of God. Christ would have the vilest sinners come to him for salvation immediately, without delaying to prepare themselves for him. When the wicked jailer inquired, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul directed him forthwith to believe on Christ, with a promise that in so doing he should be saved: and straightway, he and all his were baptized, Acts xvi. 30, 33. Paul does not tell him that he must reform his heart and life first, though he was in a very sinful condition at that time, having but a little before fastened Paul and Silas in the stocks, and just attempted a horrid wilful self-murder. Those three thousand Jews that were converted by Peter's preaching, and added the same day to the Church by baptism, Acts ii. 41, seemed to have as much need of some considerable time to prepare themselves for receiving Christ as others, because they had but lately polluted themselves with the murder of Christ himself, ver. 23. Christ commands his servants to go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and to bring in to his feast, the poor and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind; yea, to go out into the highways, and to compel them to come in, without allowing them to tarry until they had cleansed their sores, and shifted off their filthy rags and swarms of vermin. Christ would have us believe on him that justifies the ungodly; and therefore, he does not require us to be godly before we believe, Rom. iv. 5. He came as a physician for the sick, and does not expect that they should recover their health in the least degree before they come to him, Matt. ix. 12. The vilest sinners are fitly prepared and qualified for this design, which is to show forth the exceeding riches of grace pardoning our sins, and saving us freely, Eph. ii. 5, 7. For this end the law of Moses entered, that the "offence

might abound, that so where sin abounded, grace might much more abound," Rom. v. 20. He loved us in our most loathsome, sinful pollution, so as to die for us; and much more will He love us in it, so as to receive us when we come to Him for the purchased salvation. He has given full satisfaction to the justice of God for sinners, that they might have all righteousness and holiness, and all salvation, only by fellowship with Him through faith. Therefore it is no affront to Christ or slighting and contemning the justice and holiness of God, to come to Christ, while we are polluted sinners; but rather it is an affronting and contemning the saving grace, merit and fulness of Christ, if we endeavor to make ourselves righteous and holy before we receive Christ himself, and all righteousness and holiness in Him, by faith. Christ loathed not to touch a leper, and condescended to wash the feet of his disciples, and did not expect that they should be washed and perfumed beforehand, as some great ones of the world are said to do, when they wash the feet of poor men, in imitation of Christ.

Thirdly, Those that receive Christ with an unfeigned faith shall never want a wedding-garment to adorn them in the sight of God. Faith itself is very precious, in the sight of God, and most holy, 2 Pet. i. 1; Jude, verse 20. God loves it because it gives the glory of our salvation only to the free grace of God in Christ, Rom. iv. 16, and renounces all dependence upon any conditions that we can perform to procure a right to Christ or to make ourselves acceptable to him. It contains in it a hearty love to Christ as a Saviour, and a hungering and thirsting appetite for His salvation; and it is the mouth whereby the soul feeds hungrily upon Him. What wedding-garment can sinners bring with them more delightful than this to their bountiful God, whose great design is to manifest the abundant riches of His glorious grace and bounty in this wedding-feast? The Father himself loves them because they love Christ, and

believe that he came out from God, John xvi. 27. But yet we see that the excellency of faith lies in this, that it accounts not itself, nor any other work of ours, a sufficient ornament to make us acceptable in the sight of God. It will not be our wedding-garment itself, but it buys of Christ "white raiment, that we may be clothed, and that the shame of our nakedness may not appear," Rev. iii. 18. Though it loves and desires the free gift of holiness, yet it abandons all thoughts of practising holiness immediately, before we come to Christ for a holy nature. It puts on Christ himself, and in Him all things that pertain to life and godliness. Thus every true believer is "clothed with the sun," Rev. xii. 1, even with the "Sun of righteousness," the Lord Jesus; who is pleased to be himself both our wedding garment and feast, and all our spiritual and eternal happiness.

For the more full satisfaction and consolation of those distressed souls that lie under terrible apprehensions of their own sinfulness and the wrath of God, and dare not venture to trust steadfastly on Christ for their salvation, until they can find in themselves some change from sin to holiness, I shall mention particularly several of those things that such would find in themselves; and I shall show, that if some of them be not partly comprehended in faith itself, they are fruits and consequences of faith; and therefore they cannot be rationally expected before we trust on Christ for our salvation.

1. They think it necessary to repent before they believe on Christ for their salvation, because repentance is absolutely necessary to salvation, Luke xiii. 3. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish;" and Christ places the duty of repentance before faith, Mark i. 15; "Repent, and believe the gospel." But we are to know, that Christ requires repentance first as the end to be aimed at, and faith in the next place, as the only means of attaining to it; and though the end

be first in intention, yet the means are first in practice and execution, though both be absolutely necessary to salvation. For what is repentance, but a hearty turning from sin to God and his service? and what way is there to turn to God, but through Christ, "who is the way, the truth, and the life; without whom none cometh to the Father?" John xiv. 6; and what way is there of coming to Christ, but by faith? Therefore, if we would turn to God in the right way, we must first come to Christ by faith; and faith must go before repentance, as the great instrument afforded us by the grace of God for the effectual performance of it. Repentance is indeed a duty which sinners owe naturally to God; but the great question is, How shall sinners be able to perform it? This question is resolved only by the gospel of Christ, Repent and believe. The way to repent, is to begin with believing. Therefore the great doctrine of John, in his baptism of repentance, was, that they should believe in Him that should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus, Acts xix. 4.

2. Regeneration also is necessary to salvation, John iii. 3; and therefore, many desire to find it wrought in themselves before they trust on Christ for their salvation. But consider what regeneration is. It is a new begetting or creating us in Christ, 1 Cor. iv. 15, Eph. ii. 10; in whom we are partakers of a divine nature, far different from that which we received from the first Adam. Now, faith is the uniting grace whereby Christ dwells in us and we in Him, as hath been showed; and therefore it is the first grace wrought in our regeneration, and the means of all the rest: when you truly believe, you are regenerated, and not till then. Those that receive Christ by believing, and those only, are the sons of God, "which are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 12, 13.

3. They account it necessary to receive Christ as their Lord and lawgiver, by a sincere resignation of

themselves to his government, and a resolution to obey his law, before they receive him as their Saviour. This is one principal lesson of the new divinity, and such a receiving Christ as Lord is made to be the great act of saving faith; without which such faith as I have described, whereby we trust on Christ for salvation, is reckoned no better than gross presumption. They teach, that Christ will not bestow his salvation on those that do not first yield their subjection to his kingly authority; but He calls them his enemies, because they would not that He should reign over them, and requires that they be brought and slain before Him, Luke xix. 27. And I own it as a certain truth, that Christ will save none but those that are brought to resign themselves sincerely to the obedience of his royal authority and laws. But yet we must observe that they are not brought to this holy resignation, or to any sincere purpose and resolution of obedience, before they receive his salvation, but rather by receiving it. Men who were never thoroughly sensible of their natural death in sin, easily bring themselves to resolve universal obedience to God, when they are on their death-beds, or in any imminent danger, or when they would prepare themselves for the Lord's Supper, that so they may make their peace with God, and trust securely on Christ for his salvation. But all resolutions of that kind are vain and hypocritical, sooner broken than made. Those that know the plague of their own hearts, find that their mind is enmity unto the law of God and Christ, and cannot be subject unto it, Rom. viii. 7, and that they can as soon remove a mountain, as give up themselves sincerely to obedience, before they trust on Christ for his salvation, and for the gift of a new heart, whereby they may be enabled both to will and to do anything that is acceptable to God. We should have been under sufficient obligations to all obedient purposes, resolutions and resignations, if Christ had never come into the world to save us; but

He knew that we could perform nothing holily, except He made us first partakers of salvation; and that we shall never obey him as lawgiver, until we receive him as Saviour. He is a saving Lord; trust on him first to save you from the guilt and power of sin, and dominion of Satan, and to give you a new spiritual disposition; then, and not till then, the love of Christ will constrain you to resign yourself heartily to live to him that died for you, 2 Cor. v. 14; and you will be able to say, with an unfeigned resolution, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid: thou hast loosed my bands." Psal. cxvi. 16.

4. It seems to them evident, that some good works are necessary, before we can trust on Christ safely for the forgiveness of sins; because our Saviour teaches us, that if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our heavenly Father forgive our trespasses; and directs us to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," Matt. vi. 12, 15. Restitution also was to be made of things wrongfully gotten from others, before the sacramental atonement was made by the trespass-offering, Lev. vi. 5, 7. I answer, This is sufficient to prove, that forgiving others, and restitution, according to our ability, or at least a sincere desire and purpose so to do, are very closely joined with the forgiveness of our sins, and are very necessary to fit us for prayer, and for sacramental applications of pardoning grace to ourselves. A lively faith cannot be without these fruits, and therefore we cannot pray, or partake of sacraments, in faith, without them; but yet, if we strive to do either of these before we trust on Christ for our pardon and salvation, we shall do them slavishly and hypocritically, not in a holy, acceptable manner. Our forgiving others will not be accompanied with any hearty love to them as to ourselves, for the sake of God; and our restitution will be but a forced act, like Pharaoh's letting the children of Israel go;

or like Judas' restoring the pieces of silver, being compelled thereunto by terror of spirit; and when the terror that forced us is removed, we shall be as ready to recall our forgiveness, and to wrong others again, as Pharaoh was to bring the Israelites again into bondage after he had let them go, *Exod. xiv. 5*. If you would forgive others heartily, so as to love them again, you must first, by faith in Christ, apprehend the love and mercy of God towards yourselves, and then you will be able, according to the Apostle's instructions, to be kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, "even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you," *Eph. iv. 32*. The readiness of Zaccheus to make restitution, followed upon a discovery of Christ's love to him; and his joyfully receiving Christ into his house, was fruit whereby he evidenced the truth of that faith that was already wrought in his heart.

5. I shall reckon up together several other qualifications that distressed souls would find in themselves, that they may be duly prepared to trust on Christ for their salvation; and when they have labored anxiously a long time, and cannot get them, at last they lie down in sorrowful despondence, not daring to apply the consolations of the grace of God in Christ to their wounded consciences.

Let perplexed souls mark the particulars, and observe whether the condition of their own souls be reached in any of them. "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted," what good qualifications are they that thou wouldst have, that thou mayest be encouraged to lay hold on Christ for salvation? It is likely thou wilt answer, in the bitterness of thy soul: "O let me have first some love to God and godliness in my heart, and freedom from my hateful heart risings against Him and His service! Let me have some good thoughts of God, his justice, mercy, holiness, that I may be able to justify Him though He damn me, and that I may not be filled with murmuring and hellish

blasphemies in my mind against Him. Let the raging of my lusts be abated, and the pollutions of my wicked heart a little cleansed. Let me have some holy reverential fear of God, and not merely a panic tormenting horror. I would be more affected with the wrath of God, and not be of a slighting, heedless spirit. I would be more humbled for sin, loathe it, and be ashamed of, and be sorry for it with a godly sorrow, not merely because of the punishment, but because it grieves and vexes the Holy Spirit of God. I would be able to make a willing and ingenuous confession of sin, and to pour out my soul to the Lord in lively affectionate prayer for forgiveness, and to praise and glorify Him heartily, and not be like a lifeless stone in the duty of prayer, as I am." Are these the things thou desirest, O poor distressed soul? The best reply I can make for thy speedy comfort, is, to inform thee, that the things are good, but thy desires are not well timed. It is unreasonable for thee to expect these holy qualifications, while thou art in thy natural state, under the guilt of sin, and the apprehension of the wrath of God, before thou hast received the atonement, and the new spiritual life that is by Christ through faith in His name. Thou dost but exasperate thy corruptions, and harden thy heart, and make thy "wounds to stink the more because of thy foolishness." Such good qualifications are included in the nature of faith, and for the most part they follow after it; so that they cannot possibly be obtained before thou trustest in Christ for thy salvation; as I shall show concerning them particularly in their order. A love to the salvation of God, and to the free gift of holiness, is included in the nature of faith; so that it cannot be hearty without it. Act faith first, and the apprehension of God's love to thy soul will sweetly allure and constrain thee to love God and His service universally: "We love Him, because He first loved us," 1 John iv. 19. We cannot be beforehand with God in love; and we must perceive His love, to

make us love Him : for if we look up to Him as a God contrary to us, who hates us, and will damn us, our own innate self-love will breed hatred and heart-risings against Him, in spite of our hearts. That love, which is the end of the law, must flow from "faith unfeigned," 1 Tim. i. 5. And, if hatred work in thee more than love, how canst thou expect good thoughts of God, or any other than blaspheming, or at least murmuring thoughts of Him, in this condition? Ill-will never speaks or thinks well. The first right, holy thoughts thou canst have of God, are thoughts of His grace and mercy to thy soul in Christ, which are included in the grace of faith. Get these thoughts first by believing in Christ, and they will produce in thee love to God, and all good thoughts of Him, and free thee from blasphemous and murmuring thoughts by degrees ; for "love thinks no evil," 1 Cor. xiii. 5. Then wilt thou be able to account God just and merciful, if He had damned thee, and extended His grace to others ; and thou wilt be able to think well of His holiness, and of his decrees, which many cannot endure to hear of. The way to get rid of thy raging lusts, is by faith, that "purifieth the heart, and worketh by love," Acts xv. 9, Gal. v. 6. The soul must be brought to take pleasure in God and Christ by faith, or else it will lust after fleshly and worldly pleasures. And the more you strive against lusts without faith, the more they are stirred up, though you prevail so far as to restrain the fulfilling of them. Beg a holy fear of God, with fear of coming short of the promised rest through unbelief, Heb. iv. 1. Such a fear is an ingredient of faith, and it will produce in us a reverential, yea, a child-like fear of God and his goodness ; Heb. xii. 28, Hos. iii. 5. "We must have grace, whereby we may serve God with reverence," &c. It is in the margin, "We must have or hold fast grace." And there is no other way to hold fast grace but by faith ; and this will quickly calm all panic and tormenting horror. And if

you would be free from carelessness, and slighting the wrath of God, your way is, first, by believing, to avoid despairing; for people grow careless by despairing; and, for their own quiet, they will endeavor to slight evils which they have no hope to prevent; according to the proverb, "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die," 1 Cor. xv. 32. True humiliation for sin is either a part or fruit of faith; for, on our believing, "we shall remember our own evil ways and doings that were not good, and shall loathe ourselves in our own sight for all our abominations," Ezek. xxxvi. 31. We shall also then willingly renounce our own righteousness, and "account it but dung, that we may win Christ" by faith, Phil. iii. 7, 8. But beggars will make the most of all their filthy rags, till they be furnished with better clothes; and cripples will not cast away their crutches, until they have a better support to lean on. Godly sorrow for sin is wrought in us by the pardoning grace of God: as it is found by experience, that a pardon from a prince will sometimes sooner draw tears from a stubborn malefactor, than the fear of a halter. Thus the sinful woman was brought to wash Christ's feet with her tears, Luke vii. 37, 38. We are not likely to be sorry for grieving God with our sins, while we look upon Him as an enemy, that will ease Himself well enough of His burden, and right Himself upon us by our everlasting destruction. The belief of God's pardoning and accepting grace, is a necessary means to bring us to an ingenuous confession of sins. The people freely confessed their sins, when they were baptized of John in Jordan, "for the remission of sins," Mark i. 4, 5. The confession of despairers is forced, like the extorted confessions and cries of malefactors upon the rack. A pardon sooner opens the mouth to an ingenuous confession, than *confess and be hanged*; or *confess and be damned*. Therefore, if you would freely confess your sins, believe first, that "God is faithful and just to forgive your sins" through Christ, 1

John i. 9. And, if you would pray to God or praise Him, with lively affections, you must first believe that God will hear you, and give you what is best for you for Christ's sake, John xvi. 23, 24; otherwise your praying will be only from the teeth outward; for how shall you call on Him "in whom you have not believed?" Rom. x. 14. You must come first to Christ, the altar, by faith, that by Him you may "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually," Heb. xiii. 10, 15.

Finally, To pass from particulars to the general assertion laid down in the direction; if you ask, *What shall we do that we may work the works of God*, or get any saving qualifications? I must direct you first to faith, as the work of works, and the great saving preparatory to all good qualifications, by answering in our Saviour's words, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom He hath sent," John vi. 28, 29.

DIRECTION VIII.

Be sure to seek for holiness of heart and life only in its due order, where God hath placed it, after union with Christ, justification, and the gift of the Holy Ghost; and, in that order, seek it earnestly by faith, as a very necessary part of your salvation.

EXPLICATION.

I HOPE the reader will cautiously observe in all these directions, that the holiness aimed at as the great end in the whole discourse, consists not in the grace or act of faith, required peculiarly by the Gospel; which, though it be a saving gift of Christ, yet is here considered rather as a means precedent to the reception of Christ, and all his salvation, than a part of his salva-

tion received. But the holiness aimed at, consists in conformity to the whole moral law to which we are naturally obliged, if there had never been any gospel, or any such duty as believing in Christ for salvation.

Now, in this direction, three things are contained that are very necessary to guide us to the attainment of this great end ; and therefore worthy of our serious consideration.

First, It is a matter of high concern, to be acquainted with the due place and order wherein God has settled this holy practice in the mystery of our salvation, and a great point of Christian wisdom to seek it only in that order. We know that God is the God of order, and that His infinite wisdom has appeared in appointing the order of His creatures, which we are forced to observe for the attainment of our ends in worldly things ; so also in spiritual things : “ God hath made an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure,” 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. The benefits of it have an orderly dependence upon each other, as links of the same golden chain, though several of them, and a title to them all is given to us at one and at the same time. And I think enough has been said already, to show in what order God brings us to the practice of the moral law. He makes us first to be in Christ by faith, as branches in the vine, that we may bring forth much fruit, John xv. 4, 5. He first purges our consciences from dead works by justification, that we may serve the living God, Heb. ix. 14. He makes us first to live in the Spirit, and then to walk in the Spirit, Gal. v. 25. This is the order prescribed in the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, though the law prescribes a quite contrary method, that we should first perform its commands, that so we may be justified and live ; and thereby it proves a killing letter to us. Now, mark well the great advantages you have for the

attainment of holiness, by seeking it in a right gospel-order. You will have the advantage of the love of God manifested toward you, in forgiving your sins, receiving you into favor, and giving you the spirit of adoption, and the hope of His glory, freely, through Christ, to persuade and constrain you, by sweet allurements, to love God again, who has so dearly loved you, and to love others for his sake, and to give up yourselves to the obedience of all his commands out of hearty love to Him; you will also enjoy the help of the Spirit of God, to incline you powerfully to obedience, and to strengthen you for the performance of it against all your corruptions, and the temptations of Satan; so that you will have both wind and tide to forward your voyage in the practice of holiness. On the contrary, if you rush upon the immediate performance of the law, without taking Christ's righteousness and his Spirit in the way to it, you will find both wind and tide against you: your guilty consciences, and corrupt dead natures, will certainly defeat, and frustrate all your enterprises and attempts to love God, and serve Him in love, and you will but stir up sinful lusts instead of stirring up yourselves to true obedience; or at best, you will but attain to some slavish and hypocritical performances. Oh! that people would be persuaded to consider the due place of holiness in the mystery of salvation, and to seek it only there, where they have all the advantage of gospel grace to find it. Many miscarry in their zealous enterprises for godliness; and, after they have spent much labor in vain, God makes a breach upon them, even to their everlasting destruction, as he did upon Uzza, to a temporal destruction, "Because they sought him not after a due order," 1 Chron. xiii. 10.

Secondly, We are to look upon holiness as a very necessary part of that salvation that is received by faith in Christ. Some are so wrapped up in a cove-

nant of works, that they accuse us of making good works needless to salvation, if we will not acknowledge them to be necessary, either as conditions to procure an interest in Christ, or as preparatives to fit us for receiving Him by faith. And others, when they are taught by the Scriptures, that we are saved by faith, through faith, without works, do begin to disregard all obedience to the law as not at all necessary to salvation, and do account themselves obliged to it only in point of gratitude: if it be wholly neglected, they doubt not but free grace will save them harmless. Yea, some are given up to such strong Antinomian delusions, that they account it a part of the liberty from the bondage of the law purchased by the blood of Christ, to make no conscience of breaking the law in their conversation. One cause of these errors, that are so contrary one to the other, is, that many are prone to imagine nothing else to be meant by salvation, but to be delivered from hell, and to enjoy heavenly happiness and glory: hence they conclude, that, if good works be a means of glorification, and precedent to it, they must also be a precedent means of our whole salvation; and that, if they be not a necessary means of our whole salvation, they are not all necessary to glorification. But though salvation be often taken in Scripture, by way of eminency, for its perfection in the state of heavenly glory, yet, according to its full and proper signification, we are to understand by it, all that freedom from the evil of our natural corrupt state, and all those holy and happy enjoyments that we receive from Christ our Saviour, either in this world by faith, or in the world to come by glorification.

Thus, justification, the gift of the Spirit to dwell in us, the privileges of adoption, are parts of our salvation, which we partake of in this life. Thus also, the conformity of our hearts to the law of God, and the fruits of righteousness with which we are filled by Jesus Christ in this life, are a necessary part of our sal-

vation. God saves us from our sinful uncleanness here, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, as well as from hell hereafter, Ezek. xxxv, 29. Tit. iii. 5. Christ was called Jesus, that is a Saviour, because He saved His people from their sins, Matt. i. 21. Therefore it is part of our salvation, to deliver us from our sins; which is begun, in this life, by justification, and sanctification, and perfected by glorification in the life to come. Can we rationally doubt, whether it be any proper part of our salvation by Christ, to be quickened, to live to God, when we were by nature dead in trespasses and sins; and to have the image of God in holiness and righteousness restored to us, which we lost by the fall: and to be freed from a vile, dishonorable slavery to Satan and our own lusts, and made the servants of God; and to be honored so highly, as to walk by the Spirit, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit? and yet what is all this but holiness in heart and life? We conclude, then, that holiness in this life is absolutely necessary to salvation, not only as a means to the end, but by a nobler kind of necessity, as part of the end itself. Though we are not saved by good works, as procuring causes, yet we are saved to good works as fruits and effects of saving grace; which God has prepared that we should walk in them; Eph. ii. 10. It is indeed one part of our salvation, to be delivered from the bondage of the covenant of works; but the end of this is, not that we may have liberty to sin, (which is the worst of slavery,) but that we may fulfil the royal law of liberty, and that we may serve "in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter," Gal. v. 13, Rom. vii. 6. Yea, holiness in this life is such a part of our salvation, as is a necessary means to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in heavenly light and glory; without holiness we can never see God, Heb. xii. 14, and are as unfit for the glorious presence, as swine for the presence-chamber of an earthly prince. I

confess some may be converted, when they are so near the point of death, that they may have little time to practise holiness in this world : but the grace of the Spirit is active, like fire, Matt. iii. 11, and, as soon as it is given, it will immediately produce good inward working of love to God, and Christ, and His people ; which will be sufficient to manifest the righteous judgment of God in saving them at the great day, when He shall judge every man according to his work ; though some possibly may not have so much time to discover their inward grace in any outward works, as the thief upon the cross, Luke xxiii. 40, 43.

The third and last thing to be noted in this direction, is, That holiness of heart and life is to be sought for earnestly by faith, as a very necessary part of our salvation. Great multitudes of ignorant people, that live under the Gospel, harden their hearts in sin, and ruin their souls forever, by trusting on Christ for such an imaginary salvation, as consists not at all in holiness, but only in forgiveness of sin, and deliverance from everlasting torments. They would be free from the punishment due to sin ; but they love their lusts so well, that they hate holiness, and would not be saved from the service of sin. The way to oppose the pernicious delusion is, not to deny, as some do, that trusting on Christ for salvation is a saving act of faith ; but rather to show, that none do or can trust on Christ for true salvation, except they trust on Him for holiness ; neither do they heartily desire true salvation, if they do not desire to be made holy and righteous in their hearts and lives. If ever God and Christ give you salvation, holiness will be one part of it ; if Christ wash you not from the filth of your sins, you have no part with Him, John xiii. 8. What a strange kind of salvation do they desire, that care not for holiness ! They would be saved, and yet be altogether dead in sin, aliens from the life of God, bereft of the image of God, deformed

by the image of Satan, his slaves, and vassals to their own filthy lusts, utterly unmeet for the enjoyment of God in glory. Such a salvation as that was never purchased by the blood of Christ; and those that seek it, abuse the grace of God in Christ, and turn it into lasciviousness. They would be saved by Christ, and yet out of Christ in a fleshly state; whereas God frees none from condemnation, but those that are in Christ, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit: or else they would divide Christ, and take a part of His salvation, and leave out the rest; but Christ is not divided, 1 Cor; i. 13. They would have their sins forgiven, not that they may walk with God in love in time to come, but that they may practise their enmity against Him, without any fear of punishment. But let them not be deceived, God is not mocked. They understand not what true salvation is, neither were they ever yet thoroughly sensible of their lost estate, and of the great evil of sin; and that which they trust on Christ for, is but an imagination of their own brains; and therefore their trusting is gross presumption. True gospel faith makes us come to Christ with a thirsty appetite, that we may drink of living water, even of His sanctifying Spirit, John vii. 37, 38; and to cry out earnestly to save us, not only from hell, but from sin; saying, "Teach us to do thy will; thy Spirit is good," Ps. cxiii. 10. "Turn thou me and I shall be turned," Jer. xxxi. 18. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me," Ps. li. 10. This is the way whereby the doctrine of salvation by grace necessitates us to holiness of life, by constraining us to seek for it by faith in Christ, as a substantial part of that salvation which is freely given to us through Christ.

DIRECTION IX.

We must first receive the comforts of the Gospel, that we may be able to perform sincerely the duties of the law.

EXPLICATION.

SINCE man fell from obedience to God, which he was enabled and engaged to perform by the comforts of his first happy state in paradise, God might have justly refused ever to give man again any comforts beforehand, to encourage him to his duty; that the way to holiness being hedged up against him with the thorns and briers of fear, grief, and despair, he might never be able to escape the sentence of death which was denounced against his first transgression. This justice of God is manifest in the method of the legal covenant, wherein God promises us no life, comfort, or happiness, until we have thoroughly performed His law; and may be seen in the Mount Sinai promulgation, explicated, Lev. xxvi. throughout. And we are by nature so strongly addicted to this legal method of salvation, that it is a hard matter to dissuade those that live under the light of the Gospel, from placing the duties of the law before the comforts of the Gospel. If they cannot make salvation itself, yet they will be sure to make all the comforts of it, to depend upon their own works. They think it as unreasonable to expect comfort before duty, as wages before work, or the fruits of the earth before the husbandman's labor, 2 Tim. ii. 6. They consider that the only effectual way to secure the obedience we owe to the law of God, is to ground all our comforts on the performance of it; and that the contrary doctrine strengthens the hands of the wicked, by prophesying peace to them, where there is no peace, Ezek. xiii. 16, 22; and opens the floodgates to all li-

centiousness. Therefore some preachers will advise men not to be solicitous and hasty of getting comfort, but that they should rather exercise themselves diligently in the performance of their duty; and they tell them, that, in so doing, their condition will be safe and happy at last; though they never enjoy any comfort of their salvation, as long as they live in this world.

That you may rightly understand what I have asserted in the direction against such vulgar errors, take notice, that I do not make the only place of gospel comfort to be before the duties of the law. I acknowledge, that God comforts his people on every side, Psal. lxxi. 21, both before and after the performance of their duty, and that the greatest consolations follow after duty; yet some comforts God gives to his people beforehand, as advance money, to furnish them for his service, though most of the pay comes in afterward. Neither do I hereby speak any peace to those that continue in their sinful natural state: for the comforts I speak of, cannot be received without rejecting those false confidences whereby natural men harden themselves in sin, nor without that effectual working of the Spirit, whereby we are made good trees, that we may bring forth good fruit. Though they are given before the sincere practice of the law, yet they are not given to us in our corrupt sinful nature, but in and with the new holy nature; which immediately produces a holy practice, though it must necessarily go before, as the cause before the effect: and they are no other than comforts of those spiritual benefits by which our new state and nature is produced, and of which it is constituted and made up; as the comforts of redemption, justification, adoption, the gift of the Spirit, and the like. Neither do I intend here any transport or ravishment of joy and delight, but only such manner of comfort, as rationally strengthens, in some measure, against the oppression of fear, grief, and despair, which we are liable to, by reason of our natural sinfulness and misery.

This explanation of the sense of my assertion, is sufficient to answer some common objections against it. And I hope the truth of it will be fully evidenced by the following arguments.

First, This truth is clearly deducible from those principles of holiness that have been already confirmed. I have showed, that we must have a good persuasion of our reconciliation with God, and of our happiness in heaven, and of our sufficient strength both to will and to do that which is acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, that we may be rationally inclined and bent to the practice of holiness; and that these endowments must be had, by receiving Christ himself, with His Spirit in all His fulness, by trusting on Him for all His salvation, as He is freely promised to us in the Gospel; and that by His faith we as really receive Christ, as our food by eating and drinking. Now let right reason judge; can we be persuaded of the love of God, of our everlasting happiness, and our strength to serve God, and yet be without any comforts? Can the glad tidings of the gospel of peace be believed, and Christ and His Spirit actually received into the heart, without any relief to the soul from oppressing fear, grief, despair? Can the salvation of Christ be comfortless, or the bread and water of life without any sweet relish, to those that feed on Him, with hungering and thirsting appetites? God will not give such benefits as these to those that do not desire and esteem them above the world. And certainly the very receiving of them will be comfortable to such, except they receive them blindfold; which they cannot do, when the very giving and bestowing them, opens the eyes of a sinner, and turns him from darkness to light, whereby, at least in some measure, he sees and perceives spiritually the things that concern his present and future peace, and reaps some encouraging and strengthening comfort thereby to the practice of holiness.

Secondly, Peace, joy, hope, are recommended to us

in Scripture, as the spring of other holy duties ; and fear and oppressing grief forbidden, as hindrances to true religion : “The peace of God keepeth our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus,” Phil. iv. 7. “Be not sorry : for the joy of the Lord is your strength,” Neh. viii. 10. “Every man that hath his hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure,” 1 John iii. 3. “Fear hath torment : he that feareth is not made perfect in love,” 1 John iv. 18. This is the reason why the Apostle doubles his exhortation, to rejoice in the Lord always, as a duty of exceeding weight and necessity, Phil. iv. 4. What are such duties but comfort itself ? And can we think that these duties are necessary to our continuance in a holy practice, and yet not to the beginning of it, where the work is most difficult, and encouragement most needful. Therefore we must make haste, in the first place, to get a comfortable frame of spirit, if we would make haste, and not delay, to keep God’s holy commandments.

Thirdly, The usual method of gospel doctrine, as it is delivered to us in the holy Scriptures, is, first to comfort our hearts, and thereby to establish us in every good word and work, 2 Thess. ii. 17. And it appears how clearly this method is adjusted in several epistles written by the apostles, wherein they first acquaint the churches with the rich grace of God toward them in Christ, and the spiritual blessings which they are made partakers of, for their strong consolation ; and then they exhort them to a holy conversation answerable to such privileges. And it is not only the method of whole epistles, but of many particular exhortations to duty, wherein the comfortable benefits of the grace of God in Christ, are made use of as arguments and motives to stir up the saints to a holy practice ; which comfortable benefits must first be believed, and the comfort of them applied to our own souls, or else they will not be forcible to engage us to the practice for which they are intended. To give you a few instances out of a multi-

tude that might be alleged ; we are exhorted to practise holy duties, because we are dead to sin, and alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. vi. 11 ; and because “ sin shall not have dominion over us ; for we are not under the law, but under grace,” Rom. vi. 14 ; because we “ are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit ; and God will quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit dwelling in us,” Rom. viii. 9, 11, 12 ; because our “ bodies are the members of Christ, and the temples of the Holy Ghost,” 1 Cor. vi. 15, 19 ; because “ God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him,” 2 Cor. v. 21, and has promised, that “ He will dwell in us, and walk in us, and be to us a father, and we shall be to Him sons and daughters,” 2 Cor. vi. 18, with chap. vii. 1 ; because God has forgiven us for Christ’s sake ; and accounts us his dear children ; and Christ has loved us, and given himself for us ; and we that “ were sometimes darkness are now light in the Lord,” Eph. iv. 32, and v. 1, 2, 8 ; because we “ are risen with Christ ; and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then we shall also appear with Him in glory,” Col. iii. 1, 4 ; because God has said, “ I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,” Heb. xiii. 5 ; because of the many promises made to us, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Search the Scriptures, and you may, with delight, see, that this is the vein that runs through gospel exhortations ; and you may find the like vein of comfort running through the prophetic exhortations in the Old Testament.

Some may object, “ That the apostles used this method in their writings to saints, who had practised holiness already, that so they might continue and increase therein.” But to that I may easily reply, If it be a method needful for grown saints, much more for beginners, that find the work of obedience most difficult, and have most need of strong consolation. And I hope to show, how we may be able to lay hold of these consolations by faith in the very first beginning

of a holy life. Besides, the Gospel proposes peace and comfort freely to those that are not yet brought to holiness, that, if they have hearts to receive it, they may be converted from sin to righteousness. When the apostles entered into a house, they were first to say, Peace be to this house, Luke x. 5. At their very first preaching to sinners, they acquainted them with the glad tidings of salvation by Christ, for every one that would receive it as a free gift by faith, Acts iii. 26, and xiii. 26, 32, 38; and xvi. 30, 31. They assured them, if they would but trust heartily on Christ for all His salvation, they should have it, although they were at present the chief of sinners; which was comfort sufficient for all that duly esteem spiritual comfort, hungering and thirsting after it. And this is a method agreeable to the design of the Gospel; which is, to advance the riches of the grace of God in all our spiritual enjoyments. God will give us His consolations before our good works, as well as after them, that we may know that He gives us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, and not through the procurement of our works, 2 Thess. ii. 6.

Fourthly, The nature of the duties of the law requires a comfortable state of the soul for the performance of them. I have before proved sufficiently, that they require a persuasion of our reconciliation with God, and of our future happiness, and strength whereby we may be able to walk in holy obedience: Joshua must be strong and very courageous, that he might observe to do according to the law that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded him, Josh. i. 7. I shall instance briefly some comforts, without which several great duties cannot be sincerely performed. Can we love God and delight in Him above all, while we look upon Him as our everlasting enemy, and apprehend no love and mercy in Him toward us, that may render Him a suitable good for us, and lovely in our eyes? What doleful melody will the heart make in the duty of

praise, if we consider, that all those perfections for which we praise Him, will rather aggravate our misery, than make us happy ! What a heartless work will it be to pray to Him, and to offer up ourselves to His service, if we have no comfortable hope that He will accept us ! It is possible for us to free ourselves from carking cares, by casting our care upon the Lord, if we do not apprehend He cares for us ? Can we be patient in affliction with cheerfulness, and under persecutions, except we have peace with God, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God ? Rom. v. 1, 2, 3. What reason can persuade us to submit willingly, according to our duty, to the stroke of present death, if God be pleased to lay it upon us, when we have no comforts to relieve us against the horrible fear of intolerable torments in hell forever ?

If we should be called to suffer martyrdom for the Protestant religion, as our ancestors in this nation have done, we should find it necessary to abandon the late upstart notions that have been bred in a time of ease, and to embrace the comfortable doctrine of former Protestants, which, through the grace of God, made so many courageous and joyful martyrs.

Fifthly, The state of those that are to be brought from sin to godliness, requires necessarily, that, after they be convinced of the vanity of their former false confidences, and of their deadness in original sin, and subjection to the wrath of God, they should have a supply of new gospel comforts afforded, to encourage their fainting souls to holy practices. How little do many physicians of souls consider the condition of their unconverted patients, that are altogether without spiritual life and strength, and are or must be convinced thereof ! He that prescribes bodily exercise to a man lying bed-ridden under a dead palsy, before any effectual means are used to strengthen him, deserves the name of a merciless, insulting tormentor, rather than of a wise and tender-hearted physician. How unrea-

sonable is it to prescribe the immediate practice of love to God, and universal obedience to Him out of love, as the means of cure, for those that see nothing but wrath and enmity in God towards them in their present condition! What is it but to require a man to work without strength, promising him, that he shall have strength when his work is done? for comfort or joy is so called, because it strengthens, Neh. viii. 10. True it is, that the law, which is the ministration of condemnation, obliges them to obedience; but our merciful God expects no sincere performance of His law, from such impotent miserable wretches, in order to their salvation by Christ, till He has first delivered them, in some measure, from those discomforts, slavish fears, and despondencies, that hold them captive under the law of sin and death. We may require a strong, healthy person, first to work, and then to expect meat, drink, and wages; but a fainting, famished person, must first have food, or a reviving cordial, to strengthen his heart, before he can work.

Sixthly, Both Scripture and experience show, that this is the method whereby God brings His people from sin to holiness. Though some of them are brought under terrors for a while, that sin may be the more embittered, and the salvation of Christ rendered more precious and acceptable to them, yet such are again delivered from their terrors by the comfort of God's salvation, that they may be fitted for holiness. And, generally, a holy life begins with comfort, and is maintained by it. God gave to Adam, at his first creation, the comfort of His love and favor, and the happiness of paradise, to encourage him to obedience; and, when he had lost those comforts by the fall, he was no longer able to obey, until he was restored by new comfort of the promised seed. Christ, the second Adam, set God always before His face; and He knew, that, because God was at His right hand, He should not be moved; therefore His heart was glad, and His glory rejoiced,

Psal. xvi. 8. 9. This made Him willing to bear His agony and bloody sweat, and to be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. God drew the Israelites to obedience with the cords of a man, with the bands of love, by taking off the yoke on their jaws, and laying meat before them, Hos. xi. 4. David tells us, for our instruction, how he was brought to a holy conversation: "Thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in Thy truth," Psal. xxvi. 3. "Lord, I have hoped for Thy salvation, and done Thy commandments," Psal. cxix. 166. We have several examples in the New Testament of the joy that sinners had in the first receiving of Christ, Acts ii. 41. And, when the Gospel first came to the Thessalonians, "they received the word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost," 1 Thess. i. 4, 5, 6. "When the Gentiles heard the word of God, they were glad; and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed," Acts xiii. 48. The Apostle Paul was constrained, by the love of Christ, to give up himself to live to Christ, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. I dare appeal to the experience of any that obey God out of hearty love. Let them examine themselves, and consider, whether they were brought to give up themselves to serve God in love without comfortable apprehensions to the love of God toward them? I dare say, there are no such prodigies in the new birth.

Seventhly, What comfortless religion do those make, that allow people no comfort beforehand, to strengthen them for holy performances, which are very cross, displeasing, and grievous to their natural inclinations, as the plucking out a right eye, cutting off a right hand; but would have them first to do such things with love and delight, under all their present fears, despondencies, and corrupt inclinations, and to hope, that, by doing the work thoroughly and sincerely, they shall at last attain to a more comfortable state! All true spiritual comfort, as well as salvation, is indeed

quite banished out of the world, if it be suspended upon the condition of our good works; which has already appeared to be the condition of the law, that works no comfort, but wrath, Rom. iv. 14, 15. This makes the ways of godliness odious to many. They think they shall never enjoy a pleasant hour in this world, if they walk in them; and they had rather comfort themselves with sinful pleasures, than have no comforts at all. Others labor a while in such a comfortless religion, with inward fretting and repining at the bondage of it, and at last grow weary, and throw off all religion, because they know none better. They that bind such heavy burdens upon men, and grievous to be borne, will plead, that they are not to be blamed, because they do but preach the Gospel of God and Christ; whereas indeed, they preach a Gospel of man's own forging, contrary to the nature of the true Gospel of Christ, which is glad tidings of great joy to all people, Luke ii. 10. An uncomfortable Gospel cannot proceed from God the Father, who is "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort," 2 Cor. i. 3; nor from Christ, who is "the consolation of Israel," Luke ii. 25; nor from the Spirit, who is "the Comforter," John xiv. 16, 17. God "meets him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness," Isa. lxiv. 5. He will be served with gladness and singing; as he showed by the type of variety of music, and great numbers of musicians in the temple. Christ speaks to us by His Gospel, that His "joy may abide in us, and that our joy may be full," John xv. 11. No sorrow is approved of by God, except godly sorrow, which can never be in us without some comfort of the love of God towards us. They that are offended at the uncomfortableness of a religious life, never yet knew the true way of religion; else they would find, that "the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," Prov. iii. 17.

DIRECTION X.

That we may be prepared by the comforts of the Gospel to perform sincerely the duties of the law, we must get some assurance of our salvation, in that very faith whereby Christ Himself is received into our hearts: therefore we must endeavor to believe on Christ confidently, persuading and assuring ourselves, in the act of believing, that God freely gives to us an interest in Christ and His salvation, according to His gracious promise.

EXPLICATION.

It is evident that those comforts of the Gospel that are necessary to a holy practice, cannot be truly received, without some assurance of our interest in Christ and His salvation; for some of these comforts consist in a good persuasion of our reconciliation with God, and of our future heavenly happiness, and of strength both to will and do that which is acceptable to God through Christ, as has been before shown. Hence it will clearly follow, that this assurance is very necessary to enable us for the practice of holiness, as those comforts that must go before the duties of the law in order of nature as the cause goes before the effect, though not in any distance of time. My present work is, to show, what this assurance is, that is so necessary to holiness, and which I have here asserted we must act, in that very faith whereby we receive Christ Himself into our hearts, even in justifying, saving faith. This doctrine seems strange to many that profess themselves Protestants of late days; whereas it was formerly highly owned by the chief Protestants whom God made use of to restore the purity of the Gospel, and to maintain it against the Papists for many years. They commonly taught, That faith was a persuasion or confidence of our own salvation by Christ; and that we must be sure to apply Christ and His salvation to ourselves in

believing. And this doctrine was one of the great engines whereby they prevailed to overthrow the Popish superstition, of which, doubtfulness of salvation is one of the principal pillars. But many of the successors of the Protestants have deserted them, and left their writings to be shamefully insulted by the Papists. And this innovation has been of longer standing among us, than several other parts of our new divinity, and maintained by those that profess to abhor that corrupt doctrine which the Papists have built upon such principles. Modern divines may think that they stand upon the shoulders of their predecessors, whose labors they enjoy, and that they can see further than they; as the schoolmen might have like thoughts of the ancient fathers: but for all this, they may not be able to see so far, if the eyes of their predecessors were better enlightened by the Spirit of God, to understand the mystery of the Gospel. And why may we not judge that it is so in the present case? The eyes of men in these late years have been blinded in this point of assurance by many false imaginations. They think, because salvation is not promised to us absolutely, but upon condition of believing on Christ for it; therefore, we must first believe directly on Christ for our salvation, and, after that, we must reflect in our minds upon our faith, and examine it by several marks and signs, especially by the fruit of sincere obedience; and if, upon this examination, we find out certainly that it is true saving faith, then, and not before, we may believe assuredly, that we in particular shall be saved. On this account they say, that our salvation is by the direct, and our assurance by the reflex act of faith; and that many have true faith, and shall be saved, who never had any assurance of their salvation as long as they live in this world. They find by Scripture and experience, that many precious saints of God are frequently troubled with doubtings whether they shall be saved, and whether their faith and obedience be

sincere; so that they cannot see assurance in themselves; therefore, they conclude, that assurance must not be accounted absolutely necessary to justifying faith and salvation, lest we should make the hearts of doubting saints sad and drive them to despair. They account that former Protestants were guilty of a manifest absurdity, in making assurance to be of the nature and definition of saving faith; because all that hear the Gospel are bound to saving faith, and yet they are not bound absolutely to believe that they themselves shall be saved; for then many of them would be bound to believe that which is not declared in the Gospel concerning them in particular: yea, that which is a plain lie, because the Gospel shows that many of those that are called, are not chosen to salvation, but perish forever, Matt. xx. 16. No wonder if the appearance of so great an absurdity move many to imagine, that saving faith is a trusting or resting on Christ, as the only sufficient means of salvation, without any assurance; or, that it is a desiring and adventuring to trust or rely upon him, in a mere state of suspense and uncertainty concerning our salvation, or with a probable opinion or conjectural hope of it at best.

Another objection against this doctrine of assurance, is, That it destroys self-examination; brings forth the evil fruits of pride and arrogance, as if they knew their places in heaven already, before the day of judgment; causes carelessness of duty, carnal security, and all manner of licentiousness. And this makes them commend doubtfulness of our salvation, as necessary to maintain in us humility, religious fears, watchfulness, much searching and trying our spiritual state and ways, diligence in good works, and all devotion.

Against all these contrary imaginations, I shall endeavor to maintain this ancient Protestant doctrine of assurance, which I have expressed in the direction. And, first, I shall lay down some observations for the right understanding of it, which will be sufficient to

turn the edge of the strongest objections that can be made against it.

First, Observe diligently, that the assurance referred to, is not a persuasion that we have already received Christ and His salvation, or that we have been already brought into a state of grace; but only, that God is pleased graciously to give Christ and His salvation to us, and to bring us into a state of grace, though we have been altogether in a state of sin and death until this present time; so that this doctrine does not at all tend to excite presumption in wicked and unregenerate men, that their state is good already, but only encourages them to come to Christ confidently for a good state. I acknowledge that we may, yea, many *must* be taught to doubt whether their present state be good; and that it is humility so to do; and that we must find out the certainty and sincerity of our faith and obedience by self-examination, before we can have a well-grounded assurance that we are in a state of grace and salvation already; and that such an assurance belongs to that which they call the reflex acts of faith, (if any act of faith can be made of it, it being a spiritual sense of feeling of what is in myself,) and is not of the essence of that faith whereby we are justified and saved; and that many precious saints are without it, and subject to many doubts that are contrary to it; so that they may not know at all that it shall go well with them at the day of judgment; and that it may be sometimes intermitted, if not wholly lost after it is gotten; and that we should strive to walk holily, that we may attain to it, because it is very useful for our growth and increase in faith, and in all holiness. Most Protestants among us, when they speak or write of assurance, mean only that which is by reflection. And I have said enough briefly to show, that what I assert, is consistent with the doctrine which is commonly received concerning it, and destructive to none of the good fruits of it; therefore not guilty of those evils that some falsely charge it

with. This kind of assurance which I speak of answers not the question, Whether I am already in a state of grace and salvation? There is another great question that the soul must answer, that it may get into a state of grace, Whether God be graciously pleased now to bestow Christ and His salvation upon me, though I have been hitherto a very wicked creature? We must be sure to resolve this question comfortably, by another kind of assurance in the direct act of faith, wherein we are to persuade ourselves, (without reflecting upon any good qualifications in ourselves,) that God is ready graciously to receive us into the arms of His saving mercy in Christ, notwithstanding all our former wickedness, according to that gracious promise, "I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her, beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God," Rom. ix. 25, 26.

Secondly, The assurance referred to, is not a persuasion of our salvation, whatever we do, or however we live and walk; but only in a limited way, through mere free grace in Christ, by partaking of holiness as well as forgiveness, and by walking in the way of holiness to the enjoyment of the glory of God. We shall not heartily desire or endeavor to assure ourselves of such a salvation as this is, if we be not brought first to see our own sinfulness and misery, and to despair of our own righteousness and strength, and to hunger and thirst for the sanctifying as well as justifying grace of God in Christ; that so we may walk in the ways of holiness to the enjoyment of heavenly glory. The faith whereby we receive Christ, must have in it, not only a persuasion of happiness, but these, and the like good qualifications, that will make it a most holy faith. Certainly an assurance thus qualified, will not beget any pride in us, but rather humility and self-loathing, except any account it pride, to rejoice and glory in Christ,

when we have no confidence in the flesh, Phil. iii. 3. It will not destroy religious fear, and excite carnal security, but rather it will make us fear going aside from Christ our only refuge and security, and walking after the flesh. Noah had cause to enter into the ark, and to abide there, with assurance of his preservation; yet he might well be afraid to venture out of the ark, because he was persuaded, that continuance in the ark was his only safety from perishing in the flood. And how can a persuasion of salvation in a way of holiness, produce slothfulness in duty, carelessness, and licentiousness? It rather mightily allures, and stirs us up to "be always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know, that our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 58. They that are persuaded of the free grace of God toward them in Christ, are not indeed solicitous about earning their salvation by their own legal works. And Satan is ready to suggest to them, that this is a sinful carelessness, and tends to licentiousness. But they that will believe this false suggestion of Satan, show plainly, that they do not know what it is to serve God in love, and that they are held in, to all their obedience, by the bit and bridle of slavish fear, "as the horse and mule, that have no understanding," Psal. xxxii. 9.

Thirdly, Beware of thinking so highly of this assurance, as if it were inconsistent with any doubting in the same soul. A great reason why many Protestants have receded from the doctrine of their ancestors in this point, is, because they think there can be no true assurance of salvation in any that are troubled with doubts, as they may find many are, whom they cannot but own as true believers, and precious saints of God. True, indeed, this assurance must, in the nature of it, be contrary to doubting; and so, if it were perfect in the highest degree, it would exclude all doubting out of the soul, and it does now exclude it in some degree. But is there not flesh as well as spirit in the best saints

on earth? Gal. v. 17. Is there not "a law in their members warring against the law of their minds?" Rom. vii. 23. May not one that truly believes, say, "Lord help my unbelief?" Mark ix. 24. Can any on earth say, they have received any grace in the highest degree, and that they are wholly free from the contrary corruption? Why then should we think, that assurance cannot be true, except it be perfect, and free the soul from all doubts? The Apostle accounts it a great blessing to the Thessalonians, that they had much assurance; intimating, that some true assurance might be in a less degree, 1 Thess. i. 5. Peter had some good assurance of Christ's help, when he walked on the water at Christ's command; and yet he had some doubtfulness in him, as his fear showed when he saw the wind boisterous. He had some faith contrary to doubting, though it were but little, as Christ's words to him show: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Matt. xiv. 29, 30, 31.

It is strange, if the flesh and the devil shall never oppose a true assurance, and assault it with doubts. A believer may be sometimes so overwhelmed with doubts, that he may not be able to perceive an assurance in himself. He is so far from knowing his place in heaven already, (as some scoffingly object,) that he will say, that he knows not any assurance that he has of being there, and needs diligent self-examination to find it out. Yet, if at that time he can blame his soul for doubting, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him," Ps. xlii. 11; if he can condemn his doubting, as sinful, and say with himself, "This is my infirmity," Ps. lxxvii. 10, these doubts are of the flesh, and of the devil; if he still endeavor to call God, Father, and complain to Him, that he doubts whether he be his Father, and pray, that God will give him the assurance of his fatherly love, which he is not sensible of, and dispel those fears and doubts;

I say, that such a one has some true assurance, though he must strive to grow to a higher degree: for if he were not persuaded of the truth of the love of God towards him, he could not rationally condemn his fears and doubts concerning it as sinful; neither could he rationally pray to God as his father, or that God would assure him of that love that he does not think to be true.

Do but grant that it is the nature of saving faith, thus to resist and struggle with slavish fears of wrath, and doubts of our own salvation, and you grant, in effect, that there is, and must be something of assurance of our salvation in saving faith, whereby it resists doubts; and you are, in effect, of the same judgment with me in the assertion, however strange my expression seems to you. If this that I have said concerning our imperfection in assurance, as well as in other graces, were well considered, this ancient protestant doctrine would be freed much from prejudice, and gain more esteem among us.

Fourthly, In the last place, let it be well observed, that the reason why we are to assure ourselves in our faith, that God freely gives Christ and salvation to us particularly, is not, because it is a truth before we believe it, but because it becomes a certain truth when we believe it, and because it will never be true, except we do, in some measure, persuade and assure ourselves that it is so. We have no absolute promise or declaration in Scripture, that God certainly will or does give Christ and His salvation to any one of us in particular; neither do we know it to be true already, by Scripture, or sense, or reason, before we assure ourselves absolutely of it; yea, we are without Christ's salvation at present, in a state of sin and misery, under the curse and wrath of God. Only I shall prove that we are bound by the command of God, thus to assure ourselves; and the Scripture sufficiently warrants us, that we should not deceive ourselves in believing a lie; but

according to our faith, so shall it be to us, Matt. ix. 29. This is a strange kind of assurance, far different from other ordinary kinds; and therefore no wonder if it be found weak and imperfect, and difficult to be obtained, and assaulted with many doubts. We are constrained to believe other things on the clear evidence we have that they are true, and would remain true, whether we believe them or not; so that we cannot deny our assent, without rebelling against the light of our senses, reason, and conscience. But here our assurance is not impressed on our thoughts by any evidence of the thing; but we must work it out in ourselves by the assistance of the Spirit of God, and thereby we bring our own thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ. None but God can justly require of us this kind of assurance, because He only "callesh those things that are not, as though they were," Rom. iv. 17. He only can give existence to things that yet are not, and make a thing to be true upon our believing it, that was not true before. He only can make good that promise, "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them," Mark xi. 24. "Who is he that saith and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not!" Lam. iii. 37. Therefore this faith is due to God only, and greatly redounds to His glory. Men will often require a believing something like it; as, when one says, "I will forgive your offence, and be your friend, if I can find that you believe it, and that you take me for a friend." But their fallible word is not sufficient ground to make us persuade ourselves absolutely, that we shall have their promised favor. The faith of miracles gives us some light in this matter. Christ assured them on whom they were wrought, and who had power given them of working them, that the miracles should be wrought, if they believed without doubting of the event, Mark xi. 22, 23. And there is a reason for this resemblance; because the end of working miracles was, to confirm

the doctrine of the gospel of salvation by faith in Christ's name, as the Scriptures clearly show; and, indeed, the salvation of a sinner is a very great miracle. It is reported, that wizards often require that those who come to them should believe they shall obtain what they desire of them, or at least that they are able to fulfil their desires; whereby the devil, the master of those wizards, shows himself to be God's ape, and that he would fain have that honor and glory ascribed to himself that is due to God alone.

Having thus explained the nature of that assurance which I have referred to, I shall now produce several arguments to prove, that there is, and must necessarily be, such an assurance or persuasion of our salvation in saving faith itself.

Fifthly, This assurance of salvation is implied in the description before given of that faith whereby we receive Christ, and His salvation, into our heart. I describe faith to be a grace of the Spirit, whereby we heartily believe the Gospel, and also believe on Christ, as He is revealed and freely promised to us therein, for all His salvation. And I showed, in the explanation, that believing on Christ is the same with resting, relying, leaning, staying ourselves on Christ, or on God through Christ, for our salvation. It may be, some will like that description the better, because faith was there described by terms that are ordinarily used, even by those that deny the necessity of assurance; but these ordinary terms sufficiently include assurance in the nature of faith, and they cannot stand without it. And this shows, that many hold the doctrine of assurance implicitly, and profess it, though they think the contrary.

Believing on Christ for salvation, as freely promised to us, must needs include a dependence on Christ, with a persuasion that salvation shall be freely given, as it is

freely promised to us. Believing with a divine faith, grounded on the infallible truth of the promise, if it did not in some measure exclude a mere suspense and wavering opinion or conjecture, were not worthy to be so called. Some may be so absurd as to say, that faith is only a believing that we shall be saved by Christ, if we perform such conditions as He requires; and then, indeed, it will leave us where it found us, as to any certainty of salvation, until those conditions be performed. But I have already prevented such an absurdity, by showing that this believing on Christ, is, itself, not only the condition of our salvation, but also the instrument whereby we actually receive it. Believing, being the proper act of faith, must needs have the same contraries to it; as staggering, Rom. iv. 20; wavering, Heb. x. 23; doubting, Matt. xiv. 31; fear, Mark v. 36. These contraries clearly illustrate the nature of faith; and show, that believing must have some confidence in it, else it would have doubting in the very nature of it: for what man that understands the preciousness of his immortal soul, and his danger of losing it, can ever avoid fear, doubting, and trouble of heart, by any believing, whereby he does not at all assure himself of his salvation? The other terms of trusting and resting on Jesus Christ, &c., whereby faith is often described by orthodox teachers, must include assurance of salvation, because they signify the same thing with believing on Christ. The soul must have its sufficient support, to bear it up against oppressing fears, troubles, cares, despair, that it may thus trust and rest. The right manner of trusting and hoping in the Lord, is, by assuring ourselves, against all fears and doubts, that "the Lord is our God, and he is become our salvation. I trusted on thee, O Lord: I said, thou art my God," Ps. xxxi. 14. "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust," Ps. xviii. 2. "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid," Isa. xii. 2. "O my soul,

hope thou in God, who is the health of my countenance, and my God," Ps. xlii. 11. True hope is grounded in God only, that He will bless us, that He may be an anchor for the soul, sure and steadfast, Heb. vi. 17, 18, 19. If you trust, rely and stay yourselves on Christ, or hope in Him, without assuring yourselves at all of salvation by Him, you make no better use of Him, than if He were a broken reed; and, if you would stay yourselves on the Lord, you must look upon Him as your God; as the prophet teaches, Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God, Isa. l. 10. If you will rest in the Lord, you must believe that He deals bountifully with you, Ps. cxvi. 7; or else, for aught you know, you may make your bed in hell. And you will show little regard to Christ, and to your own soul, if you dare to rest under the wrath of God, without any persuasion of a sure interest in Christ. People may please themselves with such a trusting or resting, &c., when they are at ease; but, in time of temptation, it vanishes away, and appears to be no true faith, but is turned into shame. The soul that lives in such wavering and doubting concerning salvation, does not stay itself nor rest at all, but is "like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways," James i. 6, 8. If you continue in mere suspense and doubt of salvation by Christ, your desire to trust is but a lazy desire, without any fixed resolution, and you dare not yet venture to trust on Him steadfastly. If you call it only your desire to trust and rely on Jesus Christ, I may answer, that you cannot do this much in a right manner, except you desire and venture to persuade and assure yourselves of your salvation by Christ, notwithstanding all the causes that you have to doubt and fear the contrary. If it be objected, that we may trust on Christ only as a sufficient means of salvation, without any assurance of the effect, I shall acknowledge that the sufficiency of God and

Christ is a good ground for us to rest on ; but we must understand by it, not only a sufficiency of power, but also of good-will and mercy towards us ; for what have we more than fallen angels to do with the sufficiency of God, and Christ's power, without His good-will toward us ? And, if this be truly believed, it will exclude doubts concerning your salvation.

Secondly, Several places of Scripture declare positively and expressly, that we are to be assured of our salvation in that faith whereby we are justified and saved. I shall produce some instances. We are exhorted to "draw near to God with full assurance of faith," Heb. x. 22. Many apply this text to that which they call the reflex act of faith, because they imagine that all assurance must needs be by reflection. But the words of the text clearly teach us to understand it of that act of faith whereby we draw near to God, that is, the direct act ; and it is that very faith whereby the just live, even justifying, saving faith, ver. 38. And this assurance must be full, at least, in the true and proper nature of it, in opposition to mere doubt and uncertainty, though we are yet further to labor for that which is full in the highest degree of perfection. And the same faith whereby we are exhorted to draw nigh unto God, and whereby the just lives, is, a little after, chap. xi. 1, affirmed to be "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." Why should saving faith have these high titles and attributes given to it, if it did not contain in it a sure persuasion of the great things of our salvation hoped for, making them evident to the eyes of our mind, as if they were already present in their substance, though yet not visible to our bodily eyes ? That faith whereby we are made partakers of Christ, and to be Christ's house, must be worthy to be called confidence, and accompanied with rejoicing hope : "Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Heb. iii. 6, 14. What is

confidence concerning anything but trust concerning it, with a firm persuasion of the truth of it? If we have only a strong opinion concerning a thing, without any absolute certainty, we are accustomed to say that we are not altogether confident of it. The faith whereby we are justified, must be in a measure like to the faith whereby Abraham "against hope believed in hope, that his seed should certainly be multiplied according to the promise of God; though, by reason of the deadness of his own body, and of Sarah's womb," he could have no evidence from his own qualifications to assure himself of it; but all appearances were rather to the contrary, as the Apostle teaches clearly, Rom. iv. 18, 19, 23, 24. As absolute as this promise was thus made to Abraham, yet it was not to be fulfilled without this assurance of faith, and, by the like faith, the free promises of salvation by Christ, will be absolutely fulfilled to us. The apostle James expressly requires that we should ask good things of God in faith, nothing doubting, which includes assurance manifestly: and he tells us plainly, that without it a man ought not to think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. Therefore, we may firmly conclude, that without it we shall not receive the salvation of Christ, James i. 6, 7. And that which the apostle James requires us not to doubt of, is the obtaining the things that we ask; as we may learn from an instruction to the same purpose given us by Christ himself, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them," Mark xi. 24. More places of Scripture might be alleged to the same purpose, but these are sufficient to evince that we are bound to assure ourselves of our salvation in faith itself, or else we are never likely to enjoy it; and that it is not humility, but rather proud disobedience to live in a state of mere suspense and doubt concerning our salvation; and that this assurance must be in the direct act of faith whereby we are justified and saved. For,

as for that which is called the reflex act of faith, it is a certain truth, and generally owned, that it is not absolutely necessary to salvation to any; and that it is sinful and pernicious to many to believe, that they are already entered into a state of grace and salvation.

Thirdly, God gives us sufficient ground in Scripture to come to Christ with confident faith, at the very first; trusting assuredly, that Christ and His salvation shall be given to us without any failing and delay, however vile and sinful our condition has been hitherto. The Scripture speaks to the vilest sinners in such a manner as if it were framed on purpose to beget assurance of salvation in them immediately, Acts ii. 39, and chap. iii. 26. This promise is universal, that "whosoever believeth on Christ, shall not be ashamed," without making a difference between Jew and Greek, Rom. x. 11, 12. And this promise is confirmed by the blood of Christ, who was given for the world, and lifted up upon the cross for this very end, that "whosoever believeth on Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 14, 15, 16. His invitation is free to any. "If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink;" and this drink is promised to every one that believeth, John vii. 37, 39. The command of believing is propounded, not only in general, but in particular; and the promise of salvation upon believing, is also applied personally, and that to such as have been hitherto in a state of sin and wrath; as to the wicked, persecuting, self-murdering jailer, Acts xvi. 31. "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, and thine house." God commanded them that walked altogether in sin hitherto, to call him their own Father, in their very first returning, Jer. iii. 4; so, Hos. ii. 25. God says, He "will say, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God;" confidently averring that personal interest in Him. God hath joined confidence and salvation inseparably together: "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall

be your strength," Isa. xxx. 15. What a poor, slender use and improvement do many make of these discoveries of the rich grace of God toward sinners, who say, that, if we see that we have performed the condition of believing, then we may take Christ confidently as our own? They skip over the first principal use they ought to make of them. The very performance of the condition is, to take Christ as our own immediately, and to eat him and drink him, by believing confidently on Him for our salvation. If an honest rich man say to a poor woman, "I promise to be thy husband if thou wilt have me; say but the word, and I am thine;" may not she presently answer confidently, "Thou art my husband, and I claim thee for my husband?" And should she not rather say so, than say, "I believe not what thou sayest?" If an honest man say, "Do but take this gift, and it is your own; do but eat and drink, and you are freely welcome;" may not I take the gift, and eat and drink at first, without any further ado, and with assurance that it is mine freely? If I do it doubtingly, I disparage the honesty and credit of the donor, as if he were not a man of his word. In like manner, if fearing to be too confident, lest we should believe a lie, we should come to Christ doubtingly, and in mere suspense, whether we shall be freely entertained, after all God's free invitations and promises, should we not disparage the faithfulness of God? And should we not be guilty of making God a liar? As the apostle John teaches, because of our not believing the record which God gave of his Son: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son," 1 John v. 10, 11. And what if the salvation promised, be not absolutely intended for all to whom the Gospel comes? It is enough that God gives us his faithful word, that they that believe shall have it, and none else; and has absolutely intended to fulfil His word that none shall find it to be a lie to them, and has joined believing and

salvation inseparably together. On this ground God may justly cause the promise of this salvation to be published to all, and may justly require all to believe on Him assuredly for their own salvation, that so it may appear whether they will give him the glory of His truth: and, if they will not, He may justly reject them, and punish them severely for dishonoring Him by their unbelief. In this case, we must not look to the secret decrees of God, but to His revealed promises and command. Thus God promised to the Israelites in the wilderness, that He would give them the land of Canaan, and would fight for them against their enemies; and required them not to fear or be discouraged, that so the promise might be fulfilled to them; yet God never absolutely decreed or intended, that those Israelites should enter in; as the event quickly manifested, Deut. i. 20, 21, 29, 30. Yet were they not bound in this case to trust confidently in God, to give them victory over their enemies, and to give them the possession of the land? had they not sufficient ground for such a faith? was it not just with God to consume them in the wilderness for their unbelief? "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being made of entering into this everlasting rest through Christ, we should come short of it, and fall after the same example of unbelief," Heb. iv. 1, 11.

Fourthly, The professors of true godliness, that we read of through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, commonly professed their assurance and persuasion of their interest in God and His salvation, and were directed by the word of God so to do; and true saints had still some true assurance of it. And we have no cause to judge, that this assurance was grounded on the certainty of their own good qualifications, but rather on the promises of God by the direct act of faith. We may judge of the ordinary profession of the frame of spirit that was in saints, by some instances. I shall begin with the profession that the Church made

when it was very corrupt, at its first coming out of Egypt, when few of them could assure themselves, by their own good qualifications, that they were in a state of grace already ; which many now imagine to be the only way of assurance.

Even in that corrupt time, the children of Israel sung that triumphant song of Moses, "The Lord is my strength and my song, and He is become my salvation : He is my God, &c." *Exod. xv. 2.* Moses taught them in this song, to assure themselves of their own personal interest in the salvation ; and he guided them to the practice of their duty. And they did not find fault with Moses, as some do with ministers in these days, for putting them to express more confidence in their song, than they can find ground for from their qualifications ; but they applied themselves to the exercise of their faith, agreeably to the song : and, doubtless, this faith was unfeigned in some few of them, though but feigned in others ; for it is testified of them, that then they believed His words, they sang His praise, *Psal. cvi. 12.* Several other psalms and songs that were by divine appointment in common use under the Old Testament, are as clear an evidence as we can desire, of that assurance of faith which is commonly professed, and that people were generally bound to, under the Old Testament ; as *Psal. xxiii. xxvii. xlv. and xlvi.* Many other psalms, or expressions in psalms might be alleged. The spirits of few, in comparison, could have thoroughly complied with such psalms, though they were true believers, if all the assurance of the love of God must altogether depend upon the certain knowledge of the sincerity of their own hearts. We have a great cloud of witnesses gathered out of the whole history of the Old Testament, *Heb. xi.*, who did, and suffered, and obtained great things by faith ; whose examples are produced on purpose that we may follow them in believing, to the saving of our souls, *Heb. x. 39.* And, if we consider these examples particularly,

we shall find, that many of them evidently guide us to such a saving faith as has an assurance of the effect contained in the nature of it. I confess, we read several times of the fears and doubts of the saints under the Old Testament; but we read also how their faith opposed such fears and doubts, and how they themselves condemned them as contrary to faith, as in the Psalms; Ps. xlii. 11, xxxi. 22, and lxxvii. 7, 10. The most mournful psalm in Scripture begins with an expression of some assurance, Psal. lxxxviii. 1. And we may note, that the doubts that we meet with of the saints of old, were commonly occasioned by some extraordinary affliction, or some heinous transgression; not by common failings, or the common original depravation of nature, or the uncertainty of their election, or any thought that it is humility to doubt, and that they were not bound to be confident of God's salvation, because then many might be bound to believe a lie. It is hard to find any of these occasions of doubting under the Old Testament, though they are grown so rife among us now under the New Testament.

In the time of the apostles, we may well expect that the assurance of faith grew higher, because the salvation of Christ was revealed, and the Spirit of adoption poured forth plentifully, and the Church made free from its former bondage under the terrifying legal covenant. Paul could prove to primitive Christians, by appeals to their own experience, that they were the "children and heirs of God, because they had not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits," (or "*beareth our spirits witness*," as the Syriac and vulgar Latin render it, and as the like Greek phrase is rendered, Rom. ix. 1 :) "that we are the children of God, and, if children, then heirs," Rom. viii. 15, 16, 17; Gal. iv. 6. And the Apostle tells the Ephesians, that, after they believed, "they were sealed with the Holy Spirit,

which was the earnest of their inheritance," Eph. i. 13, 14, that is, they were sealed from the same time that they believed; for the original words are in the same tense. If this witness, seal, and earnest of the Spirit had not been ordinary to believers, it would not have been sufficient to prove, that they were the children of God; and such manner of arguing might have driven some to despair, who wanted this witness, seal, and earnest.

Let us inquire now, whether the Spirit bears witness that we are the children of God, and enables us to cry, Abba, Father, by the direct act, or by that which they call the reflex act of faith? For we must not think that it is done by an enthusiasm, without any ordinary means; nor can we reasonably imagine, that no true believers can call God Father, by the guidance of the Spirit, but only those few that are so sure of their own sincerity, that by reflecting upon it, they can ground an act of faith concerning their own interest in Christ: no, surely. Therefore we may judge rather, that the Spirit works this in us, by giving us saving faith itself, by the direct act of which all true believers are enabled to trust assuredly on Christ for the enjoyment of the adoption of children, and all His salvation, according to the free promise of God; and to call God Father, without reflecting on any good qualifications in themselves; for the Spirit is received by the direct act of faith, Gal. iii. 2, and so He is the Spirit of adoption, and comfort, to all that receive Him. They who assert, that the Spirit witnesses our adoption, only by assuring us of the sincerity of our faith, love, and other gracious qualifications, and by the reflex act of faith, teach also commonly, that you must again try, whether the spirit thus witnessing, be the Spirit of truth, or of delusion, by searching narrowly, whether our inward grace be sincere or counterfeit: so that hereby the testimony of the Spirit is rendered so hard to be discerned, that it stands us in no stead, but all our assurance is made at

last to depend on our own certain knowledge of our own sincerity. There are several other evidences to show, that believers generally were persuaded of their salvation in the apostles' times. They loved and waited for the coming of Christ to judge the world, 1 Cor. i. 7; 2 Tim. iv. 8. They loved all the saints for the hope that was laid up for them in heaven, Col. i. 3, 4, 5. The Corinthians, who were very carnal, and but babes in Christ, were persuaded that they should judge the world, and angels, and that their bodies were members of Christ, and the temples of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3, 15, 19. The very first coming of the Gospel to the Thessalonians, was in the Holy Ghost, and much assurance; so that they received it in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost; when as yet they had no considerable time to get assurance, by reflecting on their good qualifications, 1 Thess. i. 5, 6. Likewise, the believing Hebrews, when they were illuminated at their first conversion, "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance;" and this was their confidence, which they were not to cast off, because the just lives by faith. And therefore it appears, that this confidence belongs necessarily to justifying, saving faith, Heb. x. 32, 34, 35, 38.

Now, let those that allege the examples or experiences of many modern Christians to disprove all that I have asserted, consider well whether these are fit to be laid in the balance against all the Scripture examples and experience that I have produced out of the Old and New Testament. I confess that assurance of salvation is more rarely professed by Christians in these times than formerly; and we may thank some teachers for it who have deserted the doctrine of former Protestants on this point, and vented against it several errors, such as have been already named; and now would take advantage to confirm the truth of their doctrines from those doubtings in Christians, that have been chiefly

occasioned by it. But, however, the nature of saving faith is still the same. And I assert, that, in these days, as well as formerly, it always has in it some assurance of salvation by Christ, which does and will appear, at least in resisting and condemning all doubts and praying against them, and endeavoring to trust assuredly, and to call God, Father; except in extraordinary desertions, by which our case must not be tried. We are not to trust the judgment of many concerning themselves. They will judge falsely, that they have no assurance at all, because they know not yet, by marks and signs, that they are in a state of grace already, or because they think that there is no assurance when there are many doubts, and because it is so weak, and so much oppressed with doubting, that it can hardly be discerned, as life in a fainting fit. But, if their judgments be better informed, they may be brought to discern some assurance in themselves. We are also to take heed of mistaking those for true believers who are not so, and of judging this point by their experience, which is a vulgar error. The blind charity of some moves them to take all for true believers who are full of doubts and troubles concerning their salvation, though it may be they only are convinced of sin, and brought to some zeal of God, that is not according to the knowledge of the way of salvation by Christ; and they think it duty to comfort such ignorant persons, by persuading them, that their state is good, and their faith right, though they have no assurance of salvation. Thus they are brought to judge falsely concerning the nature of faith, out of their blind charity to such as are yet in ignorance and unbelief; and, instead of comforting such, they rather take the direct way to harden them in their natural state, and to divert them from seeking consolation by saving faith in Christ, and to ruin their souls forever.

Fifthly, The chief office of this faith, in its direct saving act is, to receive Christ and His salvation actu-

ally into our hearts, as has been proved ; which office cannot be rationally performed, except we, in some measure, persuade our hearts, and assure ourselves in the enjoyment of Him. As the body receives things into itself by the hands and mouth ; so the soul receives these things to itself, and lays actual hold on them, by the faculty of the will, making choice of them, and embracing them in a way of present enjoyment and possession, as, by the faculty of the understanding, it sees and apprehends them. Thus the soul receives comfort from outward things ; as a righteous person cannot receive inward comfort from outward things, as from worldly estate, wife, husband, friends, &c., except he choose them as good, and account them his own by a right and title. This is the only rational way whereby the soul can actively lay hold on Christ, and take actual possession of Him, and his salvation, as he has freely offered and promised to us in the Gospel, by the grace of faith, which God has appointed to be our great instrument for the receiving of Him, and closing with Him. If we do not make choice of Christ, as our only salvation and happiness, or if we be altogether in a state of suspense and doubt, whether God will be pleased to give Christ to us or not, it is evident, that our souls are quite loose from Christ, and have no hold or enjoyment of Him. They do not so much as pretend to any actual receiving or laying hold or choosing of Him, neither are they fully satisfied that it is lawful for them so to do ; but rather they are yet to seek, whether they have any good ground and right to lay hold on Him. Let any rational man judge, whether the soul does, or can put forth any sufficient act, for the reception and enjoyment of Christ, as its Saviour, Head, or Husband, while it is yet in doubt whether it be the will of Christ to be joined with it in such a near relation ? Can a woman honestly receive any one as her husband, without being assured that he is fully willing to be her husband ? The same may be

said concerning the several parts of Christ's salvation, which are to be received by faith. It is evident that we do not receive aright the benefit of remission of sins, for the purging of our consciences from that guilt that lies upon them, unless we have an assured persuasion of God's forgiving them. We do not actually receive into our hearts our reconciliation with God, and adoption of children, and the title to an everlasting inheritance, until we can assure ourselves, that God is graciously pleased to be our God and Father, and to take us to be his children and heirs. We do not actually receive any sufficient strength to encourage our hearts to holiness in all difficulties, until we can steadfastly believe that God is with us, and will not fail nor forsake us.

Hence, then, we may firmly conclude, that he who seeks to be saved by faith, and does not seek to have assurance or confidence of his own salvation, does but deceive himself, and delude his soul with a mere fancy instead of saving faith, and in effect, seeks to be saved in his corrupt natural state, without receiving, and laying actual hold of the Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation.

Sixthly, It is also a great and necessary office of saving faith, to purify the heart, and to enable us to live and walk in the practice of all holy duties, by the grace of Christ, and by Christ himself living in us, as has been showed before : which office faith is not able to perform, except some assurance of our own interest in Christ and His salvation be comprehended in the nature of it. If we would live to God, not ourselves, but by Christ living in us, according to Paul's example, we must be able to assure ourselves as he did, "Christ loved me and gave himself for me," Gal. ii. 20. "We are taught, that, if we live in the Spirit, we should walk in the Spirit," Gal. v. 25. It would be high presumption if we should endeavor to walk above our natural strength and power by the Spirit, before we have made sure of our living by the Spirit. I

have showed that we cannot make use of the comfortable benefits of the saving grace of Christ, whereby the Gospel engages and encourages us to a holy practice, except we have some confidence of our own interest in those saving benefits. If we do not assuredly believe, that we are dead to sin, and alive to God through Christ, and risen with Christ, and not under the law, but under grace, and members of Christ's body, the temple of his Spirit, the dear children of God, it would be hypocrisy to serve God upon the account of such privileges as if we reckoned ourselves to be partakers of them.

He that thinks he should doubt of his salvation, is not a fit disciple for this manner of doctrine; and he may reply to the preachers of the Gospel; "If you would bring me to holiness, you must make use of other more effectual arguments; for I cannot practise upon these principles, because I have not faith enough to believe that I have any interest in them. Some arguments, taken from the justice and wrath of God against sinners, and His mercy toward those that perform the condition of sincere obedience, would work more powerfully upon me." O what a miserable, worthless kind of saving faith is this, that cannot fit a believer to practise in a gospel manner, upon the most pure and powerful principles of grace, but rather leaves him to work upon legal principles, which can never bring him to serve God acceptably out of love! And as such a faith fails wholly in the right manner of obeying upon gospel principles, so it fails also in the very matter of some great duties, which are of such a nature, that they include assurance of God's love in the right performance of them; such are those great duties of peace with God, rejoicing in the Lord always; hope that maketh not ashamed; owning the Lord as our God and our Saviour; praying to Him as our Father in heaven; offering up body and soul as an acceptable sacrifice to him; casting all our cares of body and soul upon him;

contentment and hearty thanksgiving in every condition; making our boast in the Lord; triumphing in his praise; rejoicing in tribulation; putting on Christ in our baptism; receiving Christ's body as broken for us, and his blood as shed for us in the Lord's Supper; committing our souls willingly to God as our Redeemer whenever He shall be pleased to call for us; loving Christ's second appearance, and looking for it as that blessed hope. When we fall into any sudden doubt whether we are in a state of grace already; when we are called to any present undertaking, as to partake of the Lord's Supper, or any duty that requires assurance to the right performance of it; we must relieve ourselves, by trusting confidently in Christ for the present gift of His salvation, or else we shall be driven to omit the duty, or not to perform it rightly or sincerely. Can we judge ourselves already in a state of grace, by the reflex act of faith, if we do not find, that we perform these duties, at least several of them, sincerely; or, if we do not find, that we have such a holy faith as enables or inclines us to the performance of them? And can we be thus enabled and inclined by any faith that is without some true assurance of our salvation? Therefore I conclude, that we must necessarily have some assurance of our salvation in the direct act of faith, whereby we are justified, sanctified, and saved, before we can, upon any good ground, assure ourselves, that we are already in a state of grace, by that which they call the reflex act. Give me such a saving faith as will produce such fruits as these. No other faith will work by love; and therefore will not avail to salvation in Christ, Gal. v. 6. The apostle James puts thee upon showing thy faith by thy works, James ii. 18. And, in this trial, this faith of assurance comes off with high praise and honor. When God called his people to work outward miracles by it, all things have been possible to them: and it has frequently brought forth such works of righteousness, as may be deservedly

esteemed great spiritual miracles. From hence has proceeded that heroic fortitude of the people of God, whereby their absolute obedience to God has shone forth in doing and suffering those great things which are recorded in the holy Scriptures, and in the histories of the Church. And, if we be ever called to the fiery trial, as Protestants formerly were, we shall find their doctrine of assurance will encourage us in suffering for the sake of Christ.

Seventhly, The contrary doctrine, which excludes assurance out of the nature of saving faith, brings forth many evil fruits. It tends to bereave our souls of all assurance of our salvation, and solid comfort, which is the life of religion, by placing them after sincere universal obedience; whereas, if we have them not first, we can never attain to this obedience, nor to any assurance that depends on it, as has been proved. And this, as far as it prevails, makes us subject to continual doubts concerning our salvation, and to tormenting fears of wrath, which casts out true love to God, and can produce no better than slavish, hypocritical service. It is one of the principal pillars whereby manifold superstitions in Popery are supported, as their monkish orders, their satisfactions for sins by works of penance, bodily macerations, whippings, pilgrimages, indulgences, trusting on the merits of saints, &c. When once men have lost the knowledge of the right way to assure themselves of salvation, they will catch at any straw, to avoid drowning in the gulf of despair.

This is no way to administer any solid comfort to the wounded spirits of those who see themselves void of all holiness, under the wrath and curse of God, dead in sin, not able so much as to think a good thought. You but increase their terror and anguish, if you tell them they must first get faith and obedience; and, when they find they have done that, they may persuade themselves, that God will receive them into his grace and favor. Alas! they know that they cannot believe

nor obey, except God assist them with his grace and favor. And what if they be even at the point of death, struggling with death's pangs, so that they have no time nor leisure to get good qualifications, and examine the goodness of them? You must have a more speedy way to comfort such, by discovering to them the free promises of salvation to the worst of sinners by faith in Christ, and by exhorting them to apply those promises, and trust on Christ confidently for remission of sins, holiness, and glory; assuring them also, that God will help them to believe sincerely on Christ, if they desire it with all their hearts, and that it is their duty to believe, because God commands it.

Several other evils are occasioned by the same doctrine. Men are unwilling to know the worst of themselves, and prone to think their qualifications better than they are, that they may avoid despair. Others please and content themselves without any assurance of their interest in Christ, because they think that it is not necessary to salvation, and that but few attain to it: and in this they show little love to Christ, or to their own souls. Some foster doubts of salvation as signs of humility, though they will hypocritically complain of them. Many mispend their time in poring upon their own hearts, to find out some evidence of their interest in Christ, when they should rather be employed in receiving Christ, and walking in Him, by a confident faith.

Some are troubled with doubts, whether they should call God Father, and what apprehensions they should have of Him in prayer, and are offended at ministers, who, in their public prayers, use any expressions that the people cannot join in: as when they own God as their God and Father, and Christ as their Saviour: and upon the same account, they are offended at the public singing of many of David's psalms, and avoid partaking of the Lord's Supper, because they are not satisfied about their interest in Christ.

Though true believers have some assurance of salvation in saving faith itself, yet it is much weakened in many by this contrary doctrine, and assaulted with many doubts; and then other good qualifications must needs be low and weak together with it, and so obscure, that it is very hard to discern them. How hard a thing, then, will it be for true believers to assure themselves, by the certain knowledge of their own sincerity, that they are in a state of grace already, which some say is the only assurance of faith! Some prescribe such marks and signs to distinguish sincerity from hypocrisy, that believers cannot sufficiently try themselves by them, except they have more knowledge and experience than ordinary.

Thus many believers walk heavily in the bitterness of their souls, conflicting with fears and doubts all their days. And this is the cause that they have so little courage and fervency of spirit in the ways of God, and that they so much mind earthly things, and are so afraid of sufferings and death: and, if they get some assurance by the reflex act of faith, they often soon lose it again by sins and temptations. The way to avoid these evils, is, to get your assurance and maintain it, and renew it upon all occasions by the direct act of faith, by trusting assuredly on the name of the Lord, and staying yourself upon your God, when you walk in darkness, and see no light in any of your own qualifications, Isa. l. 10. I doubt not but the experience of choice Christians will bear witness to this truth.

DIRECTION XI.

Endeavor diligently to perform the great work of believing on Christ, in a right manner, without any delay, and then also to continue and increase in your most holy faith; that so your enjoyment of Christ, union and fellowship with Him, and all holiness by Him, may be begun, continued, and increased in you.

EXPLICATION.

HAVING already discovered to you the powerful and effectual means of a holy practice, my remaining work is, to lead you to the actual exercise and improvement of them, for the immediate attainment of the end. And I think it may be clearly perceived by the foregoing directions, that faith in Christ is the duty with which a holy life is to begin, and by which the foundation of all other holy duties is laid in the soul. It is before sufficiently proved, that Christ himself, with all endowments necessary to enable us to a holy practice, is received actually into our hearts by faith. This is the uniting grace, whereby the Spirit of God knits the knot of mystical marriage between Christ and us, and makes us branches of that noble vine; members of that body, joined to that excellent head; living stones of that spiritual temple, built upon the precious living corner-stone, and sure foundation; partakers of the bread and drink that came down from heaven, and gives life to the world. This is the grace whereby we pass from our corrupt natural state, to a new holy state in Christ; also from death in sin, to the life of righteousness; and whereby we are comforted, that so we may be established in every good word and work. If we put the question, "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" Christ resolves it, that we "believe on Him whom He hath sent," John vi.

28, 29. He puts us first upon the work of believing, which is the work of God by way of eminence, the work of works, because all other good works proceed from it.

The FIRST thing in the present direction, is, to put you upon the performance of this great work of believing on Christ, and to guide you therein. For you are to consider distinctly four things contained in it.

1. The *First* is, You are to make it your diligent endeavor to perform the great work of believing on Christ. Many make little conscience of this duty. It is not known by natural light, as many moral duties are, but only by supernatural revelation in the Gospel, and it is foolishness to the natural man. These are sometimes terrified with apprehensions of other sins, and will examine themselves concerning them; and it may be, will write them down, to help their memories and devotion. But the great sin of not believing on Christ, is seldom thought of in their self-examinations, or registered in the large catalogues of their sins. And even those who are convinced, that believing on Christ is a duty necessary to salvation, neglect all diligent endeavors to perform it; either because they account that it is a motion of the heart which may be easily performed at any time, without any labor or diligent endeavors; or, on the contrary, because they account it as difficult as all the works of the law, and utterly impossible for them to perform by their most diligent endeavors, except the Spirit of God work it in them by His mighty power; and that, therefore, it is in vain for them to work, until they feel this working of the Spirit in their hearts; or because they account it a duty so peculiar to the elect, that it would be presumption for them to endeavor the performance of it, until they know themselves to be elected to eternal life through Christ. I shall urge you to diligent performance of this duty, notwithstanding all these impediments, by the consideration, that it is worthy of our best endeavors, as ap-

pears by the preciousness, excellency, and necessity of it already discovered.

If the light of nature were not darkened in the matters of salvation, it would show us, that we cannot of ourselves find out the way of salvation, and would condemn those that despise that revelation of the way of salvation that God has given us in the Gospel, declared in the Holy Scriptures. The great end of preaching the Gospel, is for the obedience of faith, Rom. i. 5; that so we may be brought to Christ, and to all other obedience. Yea, the great end of all revealed doctrines in the whole Scripture, is, to "make us wise unto salvation by faith that is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. iii. 15. The "end of the law given by Moses, was for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. x. 4; and Christ was that end for righteousness. The moral law itself was revealed, in order to our salvation by believing on Christ; or else the knowledge of it had nothing availed fallen man, who is unable to perform it. Therefore, they that slight the duty of believing, and account it foolishness, thereby slight, despise, and vilify the whole counsel of God revealed in the Scripture. The law and the Gospel, and Christ himself, are become of none effect to the salvation of such. The only fruit that such a one can attain to, by all the saving doctrines of the Scripture, is only some hypocritical moral duties, and slavish performances, which will be as filthy rags in the sight of God in the great day. However many mind not the sin of unbelief in their self-examinations, and write it not in their scrolls, yet let them know, that this is the most pernicious sin of all. All the sins in their scrolls would not prevail to their condemnation, yea, they would not prevail in their conversation, were it not for their unbelief. This one sin prevailing, makes it impossible for them to please God in any duty whatsoever, Heb. xi. 6. If you will not mind this one main sin now, God will at last remind you of it with a vengeance.

for "he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John iii. 36. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Thess. i. 7. 8.

2. Believing on Christ, is a work that will require diligent endeavor and labor for the performance of it. We must labor to enter into that rest, lest any man fall by unbelief, Heb. iv. 11. "We must show diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end, that we may be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises," Heb. vi. 11, 12. It is a work that requires the exercise of might and power; and therefore we have need to be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inward man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, Eph. iii. 16, 17. I confess, it is easy, pleasant, and delicious in its own nature, because it is a motion of the heart, without any cumbersome bodily labor; and it is taking Christ and His salvation as our own, which is very comfortable and delightful; and the soul is carried forth in this, by love to Christ and its own happiness, which is an affection that makes even hard works easy and pleasant: yet it is made difficult to us, by reason of the opposition that it meets with from our own inward corruptions, and from Satan's temptations. It is no easy matter to receive Christ as our happiness and free salvation, with true confidence and lively affection, when the guilt of sin lies heavily upon the conscience, and the wrath of God is manifested by the Word and terrible judgments; especially when we have been long accustomed to seek salvation by the procurement of our own works, and to account the way of salvation by free grace, foolish and pernicious: when our lusts incline us strongly to the things of the flesh and the world; when Satan does his utmost, by his own suggestions, and by false teachers, and by worldly allurements and terrors, to hinder

the sincere performance of this duty. Many works that are easy in their own nature, prove difficult for us to perform in our circumstances. To forgive our enemies, and to love them as ourselves, is but a motion of the mind, easily to be performed in its own nature; and yet many that are convinced of their duty, find it a hard matter to bring their hearts to the performance of it. It is but a motion of the mind, to cast our care upon God for worldly things, and rich men may think they can do it easily; but poor men that have great families, find it a hard matter. That easy, comfortable duty which Moses exhorted the Israelites to, when Pharaoh with his chariots and horsemen overtook them at the Red Sea, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to-day," *Exod. xiv. 13*, was not easily performed. The very easiness of some duties makes their performance difficult; as Naaman the Syrian could hardly be brought to wash and be clean, because he thought it too slight and easy a remedy for the cure of his leprosy, *2 Kings v. 12, 13*. So, even in this very case, people are offended at the duty of believing on Christ, as too slight and easy a remedy to cure the leprosy of the soul; they would have some harder thing enjoined them, to the attainment of so great an end as this everlasting salvation. The performance of all the moral law is not accounted work enough for this end, *Matt. xix. 17, 20*. However easy the work of believing seems to many, yet common experience has shown that men are more easily brought to the most burdensome, unreasonable, and inhuman observations; as the Jews and Christian Galatians were more easily brought to take upon their necks the yoke of Moses' law, which none were able to bear, *Acts xv. 10*. The heathens were more easily brought to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods, *Deut. xii. 31*. The Papists are brought more easily to their vows of chastity and poverty, and obedience to the most

rigorous rules of monastic discipline; to macerate and torture their bodies with fastings, scourges, and pilgrimages; and to bear all the excessive tyranny of the Papal hierarchy, in a multitude of burdensome superstitious and ridiculous devotions. They that slight the work of faith for its easiness, show, that they were never yet made sensible of innumerable sins, and the terrible curse of the law, and wrath of God that they lie under; and of the darkness and vanity of their minds, the corruption and hardness of their hearts, and their bondage under the power of sin and Satan; and have not been truly humbled, without which they cannot believe in a right manner. Many sound believers have found by experience that it has been a very hard matter to bring their hearts to the duty of believing; it has cost them vigorous struggles and sharp conflicts with their own corruptions, and Satan's temptations. It is so difficult a work that we cannot perform it without the mighty working of the Spirit of God in our hearts, who only can make it to be absolutely easy to us, and who makes it easy, or suffers it to be difficult, according as He is pleased to communicate his grace in various degrees to our souls.

3. Though we cannot possibly perform this great work in a right manner until the Spirit of God work faith in our hearts by his mighty power, yet it is necessary that we should endeavor it, and that before we can find the Spirit of God working faith effectually in us, or giving strength to believe. We can perform no holy duty acceptably, except the Spirit of God work it in us; and yet we are not hereby excused from working ourselves, but we are the rather stirred up to the greater diligence: "Work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure," Phil. ii. 12, 13. The way whereby the Spirit works faith in the elect, is, by stirring them up to endeavor to believe. And this is a way suitable to the means that the Spirit

uses, that is, the exhortations, commands, and invitations of the Gospel, which would be of no force if we were not to obey them until we find faith already wrought in us. Neither can we possibly find that the Spirit of God effectually works faith, or gives strength to believe, until we act it; for all inward graces, as well as all other inward habits, are discerned by their acts, as seed in the ground by its springing. We cannot see any such thing as love to God or man in our hearts before we act it.

Children know not their ability to stand upon their feet, until they have made trial by endeavoring so to do: so we know not our spiritual strength, until we have learned by experience from the use and exercise of it. Neither can we know, or assure ourselves absolutely, that the Spirit of God will give us strength to believe, before we act faith; for such a knowledge and assurance, if it be right, is saving faith itself in part; and whoever trusts on Christ assuredly for strength to believe by his Spirit, does, in effect, trust on Christ for His own salvation, which is inseparably joined with the grace of saving faith. Though the Spirit works other duties in us by faith, yet He works faith in us immediately, by hearing, knowing, and understanding the word: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," Rom. x. 17. And in the word He makes no absolute promise or declaration, that He will work faith in this or that unbelieving heart; or that He will give strength to believe to any one in particular; or begin the work of believing in Christ; for faith itself is the first grace whereby we have a particular interest in any saving promise. It is a thing hidden in the secret counsel and purpose of God concerning us, whether He will give us His Spirit and saving faith, until our election be discovered by our believing actually. Therefore as soon as we know the duty of believing, we are to apply ourselves immediately to the vigorous performance of the duty, and, in so doing, we

shall find that the Spirit of Christ has strengthened us to believe, though we know not certainly that He will do it beforehand. The Spirit comes undiscernibly upon the elect, to work faith within them: like the wind that "bloweth where it listeth, and none knoweth whence it cometh, and whither it goeth," but we only hear the sound of it, and thereby know it when it is past and gone, John iii. 8. We must therefore begin the work, before we know that the Spirit does or will work in us savingly; and we shall be willing to set about the work if we be Christ's people; for, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," Ps. cx. 3. It is enough that God discovers to us beforehand in the Gospel what faith is, and the ground we have to believe on Christ for our own salvation; and that God requires this duty of us, and will help us in the performance of it, if we apply ourselves heartily thereto: "Fear not; I command thee, be strong, and of good courage," Josh. i. 6. "Arise and be doing, and the Lord will be with thee," 1 Chron. xxii. 16. Therefore he who receives this Gospel discovery as the word of God in hearty love, is taught by the Spirit, and will certainly come to Christ by believing, John vi. 45. Every one that receives it not, despises God, makes Him a liar, and deserves justly to perish for his unbelief.

4. Though the Spirit works saving faith only in the elect, and others believe not, because they are not of Christ's sheep, John x. 26, and on that account it is called the "faith of God's elect," Tit. i. 1, yet all that hear the Gospel, are obliged to the duty of believing, as well as to all the duties of the moral law, and that before they know their own particular election; and they are liable to condemnation for unbelief, as well as for any other sin: "He that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God," John iii. 18. The apostle Paul shows, that the elect Israelites ob-

tained salvation, and the rest that were not elected, were blinded; and yet even these were broken off from the good olive-tree, because of their unbelief, Rom. xi. 7, 20. We cannot have a certain knowledge of our election to eternal life before we believe; it is a thing hidden in the unsearchable counsel of God, until it be manifest by our effectual calling, and believing on Christ. The Apostle knew the election of the Thessalonians, by finding the evidence of their faith, that the Gospel came to them, not in "word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance: and that they had received the word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost," 1 Thess. i. 4, 5, 6. We are to see our calling, if we would find out that God has chosen us, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. Therefore we must believe on Christ before we know our election, or else we shall never know it, and shall never believe. And it is no presumption for us to trust confidently on Christ for everlasting life, before we have any good evidence of our election; because God who cannot lie, has made a general promise, "That whosoever believeth on Him, shall not be ashamed," without making the least difference among them that perform this duty, Rom. x. 11, 22. The promise is as firm, and sure to be fulfilled, as any of God's decrees and purposes; and therefore it is a good and sufficient ground for our confidence. It is certain, that all whom the Father has given to Christ by the decree of eternal election shall come to Christ; and it is as really certain, that "Christ will in no wise cast out any that cometh to Him," whosoever he be, John vi. 37. And we need not fear that we shall infringe God's degree of election, by believing on Christ confidently for our salvation, before we know what God has decreed concerning us; for, if we believe, we shall at last be found among the number of the elect; and, if we refuse to believe, we shall thereby wilfully place ourselves among the reprobates, who stumble at the word, being disobedient, "whereunto also

they are appointed," 1 Peter ii. 8. I shall add further, that though we have no evidence of our particular election before we believe, yet we are to trust on Christ assuredly, to make it evident to us, by giving us that salvation which is the peculiar portion of the elect only. All spiritual saving blessings, wherewith God blesses His people in Christ, are the peculiar portion of them whom "God has chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world," Eph. i. 3, 4; yet we must necessarily trust on Christ for those saving blessings, or have none at all. We are to pray in faith, nothing doubting, that God will remember us with the favor that He bears to His people; that we may see the good of His chosen, and glory with His inheritance, Ps. cvi. 4, 5. Therefore we are to trust assuredly on God, that He will deal with us as His chosen people. Thus it appears that it is not presumption, but your bounden duty, to apply yourselves to the great work of believing on Christ for salvation, without questioning at all beforehand, whether you are elected or not: "Secret things belong to God, but those things that are revealed, belong unto us, that we may do them," Deut. xxix. 29.

The SECOND thing directed to, is, that you shall endeavor to perform this duty in a right manner. This is a point of great importance, because the want of it will render your faith ineffectual to sanctification and salvation. The great duty of love, which is the end of the law, and the principal fruit of sanctification, must flow from faith unfeigned, 1 Tim. i. 5.

There is a feigned faith, that does not really receive Christ into the heart, and will not produce love, or any true obedience; such as Simon Magus had, Acts viii. 13, 23; for, notwithstanding his faith, he was in the "gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity;" and such as those Jews had, to whom Christ would not commit Himself, who did not confess Him, lest they

should be put out of the synagogue, John ii. 23, and xii. 43; and such as the apostle James speaks of—“What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can that faith save him? The devils also believe and tremble,” James ii. 14, 19. Take heed, therefore, lest you deceive your souls with a counterfeit faith, instead of the precious faith of God’s elect. The way to distinguish the one from the other is by considering well what is the right manner of that believing which is effectual to salvation. Hypocrites may perform the same works as regards the *matter*, with true saints; but they are defective in the *manner* of performance, wherein the excellency of the work chiefly consists. One great reason why many seek to enter in at the strait gate, and are not able, Luke xiii. 24, is, because they are ignorant and defective in the right manner of acting this faith whereby they are to enter. Now, I confess, that God only is able to guide us effectually in the right way of believing. And we have this great consolation, when we see our own folly and proneness to mistake our way, that, if we heartily desire and endeavor to believe on Christ aright, we may confidently trust on Christ to guide us. God has promised, that the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err in the way of holiness; and that He will teach sinners in the way;—“The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way,” Psalm xxv. 8, 9; and He commands them that lack wisdom “to ask it of God in faith, nothing doubting,” James i. 5, 6. We are, however, to know, that God guides us only according to the rule of His word; and we must endeavor to learn from the word the right way of believing, or else we are not able so much as to trust rightly on God for guidance and direction in this great work. To help you herein, I have given you before, in this treatise, a description of saving faith; and have showed, that it contains two acts in it: the one is, believing the truth of the Gospel; the other is, be-

believing on Christ, as revealed and freely promised to us in the Gospel, for all His salvation. Now, your great endeavor must be, to perform both these acts in a right manner; as I shall show concerning each of them in particular.

In the *first* place, You are highly concerned to endeavor after a right belief of the truth of the Gospel of Christ; that so you may be well furnished, disposed, and encouraged to believe on Christ, as revealed and promised in the Gospel. Hereby you are to remove all uncomfortable thoughts, and objections of Satan and your own conscience, and to overcome all corrupt inclinations, that hinder a cheerful embracing of Christ and His salvation. It is found, by experience, that, when any fail in the second act of faith, the reason of the failing is commonly some defect in this first act. There is some false imagination or other in them, contrary to the belief of the truth of the Gospel: which is a stronghold of sin and Satan that must be pulled down, before they can receive Christ into their hearts by believing on Him. If they knew the name of Christ, as He is discovered in the Gospel, and judged aright of the truth and excellency of it, they would not fail to put their trust in Him. And we are in great danger of entertaining such false imaginations, and to account many truths of the Gospel strange paradoxes, yea foolish and pernicious, because of our ignorance, self-conceitedness, guilty consciences, corrupt affections, and manifold errors, wherewith our judgments are prepossessed in matters of salvation; and because Satan labors to beguile us, as he did Eve, through his subtlety, to corrupt our minds from the simplicity of the Gospel that is in Christ, 2 Cor. xi. 3. I shall therefore give you some particular instructions, that are of greatest moment, to prevent such defects as we are most liable to in the first act of our faith.

1. You must believe with a full persuasion, that you are a child of wrath by nature, as well as others; fal-

len from God by the sin of the first Adam ; dead in trespasses and sins ; subject to the curse of the law of God, and to the power of Satan, and to insupportable misery to all eternity ; and that you cannot possibly procure your reconciliation with God, or any spiritual life and strength to do any good work, by any endeavors to get salvation according to the terms of the legal covenant ; and that you cannot find any way to escape out of this sinful and miserable condition by your own reason and understanding, without supernatural revelation, nor be freed from it, except by that infinite power that raises the dead. We must not be afraid, as some are, to know our own vileness and sinfulness ; neither must we be willing to think ourselves better than we are ; but must be heartily desirous and glad to know the worst of our own condition ; yea, when we have found out the worst that we can of ourselves, we must be willing to believe, that our hearts are deceitful, and desperately wicked, beyond all that we can know and find out, Jer. xvii. 9. This is all necessary, to work in us true humiliation, self-despair, and self-loathing, that we may highly esteem, and earnestly seek the salvation of Christ, as the one thing necessary. It makes us sick of sin, and sensible of our need of the great Physician, and willing to be ordered according to any of His prescriptions, whatsoever we suffer, rather than to follow our own wisdom, Matt. ix. 12. It was for want of this humiliation that the Scribes and Pharisees were not so forward to enter into the kingdom of heaven as the publicans and harlots, Matt. xxi. 31.

2. You are to believe assuredly, that there is no way to be saved, without receiving all the saving benefits of Christ, His Spirit as well as His merits, sanctification as well as remission of sins, by faith. It is the ruin of many souls, that they trust on Christ for remission of sins, without any regard to holiness ; whereas, these two benefits are inseparably joined to Christ, so that **none** are freed from condemnation by Christ, but those

who are enabled to walk holily, that is, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, Rom. viii. 1. It is also the rule of souls, to seek only remission of sins by faith in Christ, and holiness by our endeavors, according to the terms of the law; whereas, we can never live to God in holiness, except we be dead to the law, and live only by Christ living in us by faith. That faith which receives not holiness as well as remission of sins from Christ, will never sanctify us; and therefore it will never bring us to heavenly glory, Heb. xii. 14.

3. You are to be fully persuaded of the "all-sufficiency of Christ for the salvation of yourself, and of all that believe on Him; that His blood cleanseth from all sin," 1 John i. 7. Though our sins be ever so great and horrible, and continued in ever so long, yet He is able to deliver us from the body of death, and to mortify our corruptions, be they ever so strong. We find in Scripture, that abominable wicked persons have been saved by Him, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, covetous, drunkards, extortioners, &c., 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; such as have sinned against the light of nature, as the heathen, and the light of Scripture, as the Jews; such as have denied Christ, as Peter, and persecuted and blasphemed Him, as Paul. Many that have fallen into great sins are ruined forever, because they do not account the grace of Christ sufficient for their pardon and sanctification; when they think they are gone, and past all hope of recovery, that their "sins are upon them, and they pine away in them, how shall they live?" Ezek. xxxiii. 10. This despair works secretly in many souls, without such trouble and horror, and makes them careless of their souls and true religion. The devil fills some with horrid, filthy, blasphemous thoughts, on purpose that they may think their sins too great to be forgiven; though commonly such thoughts are the least of the sins of those who are pestered with them, and are rather the devil's sin than theirs, because they are hurried into them sore against their wills: but, if their

hearts be somewhat polluted with them, Christ testifies, "that all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven, except the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," Matt. xii. 31. And as for those that are guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, the reason why they are never forgiven, is not because of any want of sufficiency in the blood of Christ, or in the pardoning mercy of God; but because they never repent of that sin, and never seek to God for mercy through Christ, but continue obstinate until death; for the Scripture testifies, that it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance, Heb. vi. 5, 6. So that the merits of Christ are sufficient for all that seek to him for mercy by believing. There are others that despair of ever getting any victory over their lusts, because they have formerly made many vows and resolutions, and have used many vigorous endeavors against them in vain. Such are to persuade themselves, that the grace of Christ is sufficient for them, when all other means have failed: as the woman that had the issue of blood, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse by any remedies that physicians could prescribe, yet persuaded herself, that, if she might but touch the clothes of Christ, she should be whole, Mark v. 25-28. Those that despair, by reason of the greatness of their guilt and corruption, greatly dishonor and undervalue the grace of God, His infinite mercy, and the infinite merits of Christ's blood, and the power of the Spirit, and deserve to perish with Cain and Judas. Abundance of people who give up themselves to all licentiousness in this wicked generation, lie under secret despair; which makes them so desperate in swearing, blaspheming, whoring, drunkenness, and all manner of wickedness. How horrid and heinous soever our sins and corruptions have been, we should learn to account them a small matter in comparison to the grace of Christ, who is God as well as man, and offered up himself, by the eternal Spirit, as a sacrifice of an infinite value, for our salvation; and can

create us anew as easily as He created the world by the speaking of a word.

4. You are to be fully persuaded by the truth of the general free promise, in your own particular case, that if you believe on Christ sincerely, you shall have everlasting life, as well as any other in the world, without performing any condition of works to procure an interest in Christ; for the promise is universal: "Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed," Rom. ix. 33, without any exception. And, if God exclude you not, you must not exclude yourselves; but rather conclude peremptorily, that, how vile, wicked, and unworthy soever you be, yet if you come, you shall be accepted, as well as any other in the world. You are to believe that great article of the creed, the remission of sins, in your own case, when you are principally concerned, or else it will little profit you to believe it in the case of others. This is that which hinders many broken, wounded spirits from coming to the great Physician, when they are convinced of the abominable filthiness of their hearts, and that they are dead in sin, without the least spark of true grace and holiness in them. They think that it is in vain for such as they are, to trust on Christ for salvation; and that Christ will never save such as they are. Why so? They can be but lost creatures at worst; and Christ came to seek and save those that are lost. If they that are dead in sin, cannot be saved, then all must despair and perish; for none have any spiritual life, until they receive it by believing on Christ. Some think themselves worse than any others, and that none have such wicked hearts as they; and though others be accepted, yet they shall be rejected. But they should know, that Christ came to save the chief of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15; and that the design of God is to show the exceeding riches of His grace, in our salvation, Eph. ii. 7; which is most glorified by pardoning the greatest sinners. And it is only our ignorance, which leads us to think ourselves

like no one else ; for all others, as well as we, are naturally dead in trespasses and sins ; their mind is enmity to God, and is not subject to His law, nor indeed can be, Rom. viii. 7 ; and every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts are only evil, and continually so, Gen. vi. 5 ; they have all the same corrupt fountain of all abominations in their hearts, though we may have exceeded many others in several actual sins. Others think that they have outstayed their time, and therefore now they should find no place for repentance, though they should seek it carefully with tears, Heb. xii. 17. But, behold now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation, 2 Cor. vi. 2 ; even as long as God calls upon you by the Gospel. And although Esau was rejected, who sought rather the earthly than the spiritual blessings of the birthright ; yet they shall not be rejected, who seek the enjoyment of Christ, and His salvation, as their only happiness. If you come to Christ's vineyard at the eleventh hour of the day, you shall have your penny, as well as those who came early in the morning ; because the reward is of grace, and not of merit, Matt. xx. 9, 10. And here you must be sure to believe steadfastly, that Christ and all His salvation is bestowed as a free gift upon those that do not work to procure any right or title to Him, or meetness or worthiness to receive Him, but only "believe on Him that justifieth the ungodly," Rom. iv. 5. If you put any condition of works or good qualifications between yourselves and Christ, it will be a partition-wall which you can never climb over.

5. You are to believe assuredly that it is the will of God you, as well as any other, should believe in Christ, and have eternal life by Him ; and that your believing is a duty very acceptable to God ; and that He will help you, as well as any other, in this work, because He calls and commands you, by the Gospel, to believe on Christ. This makes us to set cheerfully about the work of believing, as when Jesus commanded the blind

man to be called, they said unto him, "Be of good comfort, rise; He calleth thee," Mark x. 49. A command of Christ made Peter to walk upon the water, Matt. xiv. 29. And here we are not to meddle with God's secret of predestination, or the purpose of His will to give the grace of faith to some rather than others; but only with His revealed will, in his His gracious invitations and commands, by which we are required to believe on Christ. This will of God is confirmed by his oath: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel," Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Christ testifies that He "would often have gathered the children of Jerusalem, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and they would not," Matt. xxiii. 37. And the apostle Paul testifies that God "will have all men to be saved," &c., 1 Tim. ii. 4. You are to reject and abandon all thoughts that are contrary to this persuasion. What if few be saved? Thy salvation will not make the number too great; for few will follow thee in the duty of believing. What if the wrath of God be revealed from heaven against thee in many terrible judgments, and the word, and thine own conscience condemn thee, and Christ seem to reckon thee no better than a dog, as he did the woman of Canaan? Matt. xv. 26. Thou art to make a good interpretation of all these things, that the end of them is, to drive thee to Christ, as this was the end of the curses of the law, and all the terrible dispensations of them, Rom. x. 4. If a prophet, or an angel from heaven, were sent of God, on purpose to declare that the sentence of everlasting damnation is pronounced against thee, it would be thy duty to believe that God sent him to give thee timely warning for this very end, that thou mightest believe, and turn to God by faith and repentance. Jeremiah prophesied against the Jews, that God would pluck them up,

pull them down, and destroy them for their sins; yet he himself taught them, "If they turned from their evil ways, God would repent him of the evil," Jer. xviii. 7, 8, 11. Jonah preached nothing but certain destruction to Nineveh, to be executed upon them within forty days, chap. iii. 4; yet the intent of that terrible message was, that those heathenish people might escape destruction by repentance. The most absolute and peremptory denunciations of divine vengeance against us, while we are in the world, must always be understood with a secret reserve of salvation for us, upon our faith and repentance. And we are to account that the reason why God so terribly denounces his judgments against us by his word, is, that we may escape them, by flying for refuge to His free mercy in Christ. Take heed of fostering any thoughts that God has absolutely decreed to show no saving mercy to you; or that you have already committed the unpardonable sin; or that it is in vain for you to attempt the work of believing, because God will not help you in it. If such thoughts prevail in your hearts, they will do you more hurt than the most blasphemous thoughts that terrify you, or any of the grossest abominations that ever you were guilty of, because they obstruct your believing on Christ for salvation. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. Christ saith, Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," Rev. xxii. 17. Therefore, we are to abandon all thoughts that hinder our coming to Christ, as very sinful and pernicious, arising in us from our own corruptions, and Satan's delusions, and utterly opposite to the mind of Christ, and the teachings of the Spirit. And what ground can we have to entertain such unbelieving thoughts? Has God made us of his privy council that we should be able to know that He has decreed us to damnation before it be manifest by our final unbelief and impenitence? As for the unpardonable sin, it consists in renouncing the way of salvation by Christ with the whole

heart, after we have attained to the knowledge of it, and are convinced of the truth of it by the Gospel. It is the sin that the Christian Hebrews would have been guilty of if they had revolted from Christianity to the religion of the unbelieving Jews, who accounted Christ to be an impostor, and were most rancorous persecutors of Him and his ways, Heb. vi. 4, 5. They who have committed that sin, continue implacable, malicious enemies to Christ and his ways to the end, without any repentance. Therefore, if you can but find that you desire seriously to get an interest in Christ, and to be better Christians than you are; if you be troubled and grieved that your hearts and lives are so wicked, and that you want faith, love, and true obedience; yea, if your hearts be not maliciously bent to persecute the Gospel, and to prefer atheism, licentiousness, or any false religion before it, you have no cause to suspect yourselves to be guilty of this unpardonable sin.

6. Add to all these, "A full persuasion of the incomparable glorious excellency of Christ, and of the way of salvation by Him." You are to esteem the enjoyment of Christ as the only salvation and true happiness, and such a happiness as has in it unsearchable riches of glory, and will make our cup run over with exceeding abundance of peace, and joy, and glory, to all eternity. We must account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, &c., Phil. iii. 8. Such a persuasion as this will allure and incline your wills and affections to choose and embrace Christ as the chief good, and never to rest satisfied without the enjoyment of Him; and to reject everything that stands in competition with Him, or the enjoyment of Him. Christ is precious in the esteem of all true believers, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Their high esteem of His incomparable preciousness and excellency, induces them to sell all, that they may buy this pearl of great price, Matt. xiii. 46. This makes them

to say, "Lord, evermore give us this bread, that cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life to the world. Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life," John vi. 32, 33, 34, 68. "Because of the savor of His good ointments, His name is as ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love Him," Song, i. 2. "They are sick of love to Him, because He is, in their eyes, the chiefest among ten thousand," Song, v. 8, 10. As the glory of God that appeared in the wonderful beauty of the temple, and in the wisdom and glory of Solomon, drew worshippers to God from the utmost parts of the earth; so the unparalleled excellency of Christ, which was prefigured by the glory of Solomon and the temple, more powerfully draws believers in these gospel days. The devil, who is the god of this world, knows how necessary it is for our salvation, to discern all the glory and excellency of Christ; and therefore where the Gospel is preached, he makes it his great work to eclipse the glory of Christ in his ministry, and to blind the minds of the people, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them, 2 Cor. iv. 4. One who is convinced of the truth of the Gospel, may be averse to embracing it until he see also the goodness of it, that Christ is altogether lovely and excellent.

I come now to the "second principal act of faith whereby Christ himself, and His Spirit, and all His saving benefits, are actually received into the heart; which is, believing on Christ, as revealed and freely promised to us in the Gospel, for all His salvation." The Spirit of God habitually disposes and inclines our hearts to a right performance of this act, by enabling us to perform the first act, according to the former instructions, by believing assuredly those great things of the Gospel delivered to us in "a form of doctrine," Rom. vi. 16, which we are to obey from our hearts, and to follow as our pattern, in the manner of our acting faith in Christ for salvation. Therefore I need

only exhort you briefly to act your faith in Christ according to that form and pattern, in which you have been already so largely instructed. You are to believe in Christ as alone sufficient, and all-sufficient for your happiness and salvation ; despairing altogether of any attainment of happiness by your own wisdom, strength, works of righteousness, or any fleshly, worldly confidences whatever. We must be as dead people to all other confidences, and account them to be loss for Christ, according to the example of the blessed Apostle, Phil. iii. 3, 7, 8. We must not be grieved, that we have nothing to trust upon besides Christ for our salvation ; but rather we are to rejoice, that we need nothing else, and that we have a sure foundation to rely upon, incomparably better than any other that can be imagined. And we must resolve to cast the burden of our souls wholly on Christ, and to seek salvation no other way, whatever becomes of us. If the cripple lay not the whole weight of his body upon a strong staff, but part of it on a rotten one, he is likely to receive a fall. If the swimmer will not commit his body wholly to the water to bear him up, but catches at weeds, or struggles to feel out ground, he may sink to the bottom. Christ will be all our salvation, or nothing. If we seek to be saved any other way, as the Galatians did by circumcision, Christ will profit us nothing, Gal. vi. 2.

You are also to receive Christ merely as a free gift, given to the chief of sinners, resolving that you will not perform any conditions to procure yourselves a right and title to Him ; but that you will come to Him as a lost sinner, an ungodly creature trusting on Him that justifieth the ungodly ; and that you will buy Him without money, and without any price whatsoever, Rom. iv. 5, Isa. lv. 2. Look not on your own faith or love, or any good qualifications in yourselves, as the ground of your trusting in Christ, but only to the free grace and loving kindness of God in Christ : “ How excellent

is thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." Psal. xxxvi. 7. For, if you make your faith, love, or good qualifications, your first and principal foundation, and you build Christ upon them, instead of building all upon Christ, you invert the order of the Gospel, and Christ will profit you nothing.

Another thing to be observed diligently, is, that you must come to Christ for a new holy heart and life, and all things necessary thereunto, as well as for deliverance from the wrath of God, and the torments of hell. You must also come to Him with an ardent love and affection to Him, and esteem Him better than a thousand worlds, and the only excellent portion; loathing and abhorring yourself, as a vile, sinful, and miserable creature, and "accounting all things dung" in comparison of His excellency; that you may be able to say from the bottom of your heart, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee," Psal. lxxiii. 25.

Lastly, You must endeavor to draw near with full assurance of faith, Heb. x. 22; trusting on Christ confidently for your own particular salvation, upon the warrant of that general promise, that "whosoever believeth on Christ shall not be ashamed," Rom. ix. 33. You must check yourselves for all doubtings, fears, or staggerings, concerning your own salvation by Christ, saying with the Psalmist, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul," &c. Psal. xliii. 11.

The THIRD thing contained in this direction, is the avoiding all delay in the performance of this great work of believing in Christ. Until we have performed it, we continue under the power of sin and Satan, and under the wrath of God; and there is nothing between hell and us, but the breath of our nostrils. It is dangerous for Lot to linger in Sodom, lest fire and brimstone come down from heaven upon him. The man-

slayer must flee with all haste to the city of refuge, lest the avenger of blood pursue him, while his heart is hot, and slay him, Deut. xix. 5, 6. We should make haste, and not delay, to keep God's commandments, Psal. cxix. 60, and flee for refuge to the hope set before us, Heb. vi. 18. And God commands us to flee thus by faith, without which it is impossible to please God in other duties. The work is of such a nature, that it may be performed as soon as you hear the Gospel. "As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me," Psal. xviii. 44. "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children," Isa. lxvi. 8. We have many examples of those that received the word by faith at the first hearing of it. Three thousand were added to the Church on the very same day wherein Peter first published the Gospel in Jerusalem, Acts ii. 41. So, many Jews and Gentiles were converted at the first hearing of the apostle Paul at Antioch, Acts xiii. 48. The jailer and all his house believed, and were baptized the same night wherein Paul first preached to them, Acts xvi. 33, 34. The Gospel came at first to the Thessalonians, "not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost," 1 Thess. i. 5, 6. If God open the hearts of His people to attend diligently, they may be instructed in the knowledge of the Gospel by one brief sermon, sufficiently to begin the practice of saving faith. And, when they know their duty, God requires immediate performance, without allowing us the least respite in the state of unbelief. When Satan cannot prevail with people to reject wholly the duty of believing, his next attempt for the ruin of their souls, is to prevail with them at least to delay and shift off the performance of it from time to time, by several false reasonings and imaginations which he puts into their minds. The most ignorant and sensual are easily prevailed with to defer this duty, until they have taken their fill of the pleasures, profits, and honors of this world, and are summoned to prepare

for another world, by infirmities, age, or sickness; praying and hoping, that a large time of repentance will be granted to them before they die. But such delays show, that they are really unwilling to repent and believe, until they are forced by necessity; and that they prefer the pleasures, profits, and honors of the world above God, and Christ, and their own souls. Thus they unfit themselves more and more for this great duty, by their customary walking in sin, and by misspending the precious time of their health and strength, which is best adapted for the performance of this great work. They highly provoke God never to give them time or grace to repent hereafter. Others imagine, that, after they have heard the Gospel of salvation by Christ, they may lawfully defer believing it, until they have sufficiently examined the truth of some other different doctrine, or until God be pleased to afford them some other means, to assure them fully of the truth of the Gospel. Thus they who are called *Seekers* misspend the day of grace, "ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth," 2 Tim. iii. 7.

But the truth of the Gospel so clearly evidences itself by its own light, that, if people do not wilfully shut their eyes, or blind themselves by their own pride, and love of their lusts, they would easily perceive that it is the truth of God; because the image of His grace, mercy, power, justice, and holiness, appears manifestly engraven upon it. It is a sign people are proud, when they consent not to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, 1 Tim. vi. 3. If they were humble, and sincerely inclined to do the will of God, they would know whether the doctrine be of God, or not, John vii. 17, they would quickly be persuaded by Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles, of the truth spoken to them in the Scripture. And, if they will not hear them, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead;

or whatever other miracle be wrought, to confirm the divine authority of the Gospel, Luke xvi. 31. Another sort of people there are, that delay the great work of believing, to the ruin of their souls, resting in an attendance upon the outward means of grace and salvation, instead of any endeavors to receive Christ by faith, though they be convinced of the truth of the Gospel. This they call waiting upon God at the doors of His grace and salvation, in the use of means appointed by Him, and sitting under the droppings of the sanctuary. But let them know, that this is not the right waiting on God required in Scripture. It is rather disobedience to God, and to the means of His appointment; who requires, that we should be "doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving ourselves," James i. 22; and that we should come in to the spiritual feast, Luke xiv. 23; and not only stand at the door, or sit under the droppings of the house of God, lest Christ repute us no better than eaves-droppers. That holy waiting on the Lord commended to us in the Scripture, is ever accompanied with believing and hoping in the Lord, and depends thereon: "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord," Ps. xxvii. 13, 14. "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord," Lam. iii. 26. What is it that these deluded ones wait for, before they perform the duty of believing? Is it for more knowledge of the Gospel? The way to increase thy knowledge, as well as any other talent, is, to make use of what thou hast received already. Believe heartily on Christ for all thy salvation, according to that little knowledge of the Gospel which thou hast, and thou wilt have an interest in the promise of knowledge contained in the new covenant: "They shall all know me, from the least to the greatest of them, saith the Lord," Jer. xxxi. 34. Is it

for the appointed time of thy conversion that thou waitest? Then thou waitest, as those impotent folk that lay at the pool of Bethesda, waiting for the season when the angel will come down and move the water. Know, then, that if thou enter into Christ now by faith, thou shall find in Him waters of life, and the Spirit moving them for the healing and quickening of thy soul. God has appointed by His word, that it shall be thy duty to endeavor, that the present time should be the time of thy conversion: "As the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if thou wilt hear his voice, harden not thy heart," Heb. iii. 7, 8. And thou shalt never know at what time God has purposed, in His sacred counsel, to give faith to thee, until thou dost actually believe. Dost thou wait for any manifestations or flowings in of God's saving love to thy soul? Then the way to obtain it, is, to believe, that the God of hope may fill thee with all joy and peace in believing, Rom. xv. 13. Thou hast sufficient manifestation of God's love to thy soul, by the free promises of life and salvation by Christ. Do but "trust on the name of the Lord, and stay upon thy God, when thou walkest in darkness, and seest no light" of sensible comforts any other way; otherwise thou waitest for comfort in vain, and "this shalt thou have at the Lord's hand, thou shalt lie down in sorrow," Isa. l. 10, 11. Dost thou wait for any qualifications to prepare thee for the work of believing? If they be good and holy qualifications, thou canst not have them before faith, but they are rather included in the nature of faith, or are fruits of it; as has been largely proved. If they be bad and sinful, it is strange that any should wait for them, and yet no more strange than true. Some foolishly wait to be terrified with a sense of God's wrath, and despairing thoughts; and these they call the pangs of the new birth; though, in their own nature, they are rather the pangs of the spiritual death, and bring forth hatred to God, rather than holiness; and therefore we should strive

to prevent them, by believing God's love in Christ, rather than to wait for them. It is true, God makes these despairing thoughts, as well as any other sins, works for good to them that are delivered from them by faith in Christ; they are moved thereby to hate sin, and to prize Christ the more, and the comforts of His gospel, and to loathe and abhor themselves: yet many are brought to Christ without them, by God's giving them the knowledge of their own sins, and of Christ's salvation together. Several examples of these were above mentioned, who received the word with joy at the first hearing of it. And we must not desire or wait for any evil of sin, such as these despairing thoughts are, that good may come of it; neither should we expect to be worse before we be better, when we may and ought to be better presently, by believing on Christ.

The **FOURTH** thing in the direction, is, that we should continue and increase in the most holy faith. And, that we may, we must not think, that, when we have once attained to the grace of saving faith, and thereby are begotten anew in Christ, our names are up in heaven, and therefore we may be careless: but, as long as we continue in this life, we must endeavor to continue in the faith, grounded and settled, not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, Col. i. 23; and to hold the beginning of our confidence, and the rejoicing of hope, steadfast to the end, Heb. iii. 6, 14; and to build up ourselves in our most holy faith, Jude ver. 20, abounding therein with thanksgiving, Col. ii. 7. Though we receive Christ freely by faith, yet we are but babes in Christ, 1 Cor. iii. 1. And we must not account, that we have already attained, or are already perfect, Phil. iii. 12, 13; but we must strive to be more rooted and built up in Him, until we come unto a "perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," Eph. iv. 13.

If the new nature be really in us by regeneration, it

will have an appetite to its own continuance and increase, until it come to perfection, as the new-born babe, 1 Peter ii. 2. And we are not only to receive Christ, and a new holy nature, by faith, but also to live and walk by it, and to resist the devil, and to quench all his fiery darts by it, and also to grow in grace, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God; for we are kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation, 1 Peter i. 5. As all our Christian warfare is the good fight of faith, 1 Tim. vi. 12, all spiritual life and holiness continue, grow, or decay in us, according as faith continues, grows, or decays in vigor: but, when this faith begins to sink by fears and doubtings, the man himself begins to sink together with it, Matt. ix. 29, 31. Faith is like the hand of Moses: while it is held up, Israel prevails; when it is let down, Amalek prevails, Exod. xvii. 11. This continuance and growth in faith, will require our labor and industry as well as the beginning; though we are to ascribe the glory of all to the grace of God in Christ, who is the finisher as well as the author of it, Heb. xii. 2. The church meets with great difficulties in her marching through the wilderness of this world to the heavenly Canaan, as well as in her first deliverance from Egyptian bondage; yea, we often meet with greater difficulties in going to perfection, than we did in the beginning of the good work; the wisdom and mercy of God so ordering it, that we shall be exercised with the sharpest dispensations of providence, and the fiercest assaults of our own corruptions, and Satan's temptations, after we have grace given us to stand in the evil day. You must therefore endeavor to continue and go on in the same right manner as I have taught you to begin this great work of believing in Christ, that your faith may be of the same nature from the beginning to the end, though it increase in degrees; for our faith is imperfect, and joined with much unbelief in this world; and we have need to pray still, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief," Mark

ix. 24 ; and therefore we have need to strive for more faith, that we may receive Christ in greater perfection. If you find your faith has produced good works, you should thereby increase your confidence in Christ for salvation by His mere grace. But take heed of changing the nature of your faith, from trusting on the grace and merits of Christ, to trusting on your own works, according to the Popish doctrine, that our first justification is by grace and faith only, but our second justification is also by works. Beware also of trusting on faith itself, as a work of righteousness, instead of trusting on Christ by faith. If you do not find, that your believing in such a right manner as I have described, produces such fruits of holiness as you desire, you ought not to diminish, but rather to increase your confidence in Christ ; knowing that the weakness of your faith hinders its fruitfulness ; and the greater your confidence is, concerning the love of God to you in Christ, the greater will be your love to God and to His service. If you fall into any gross sin after the work is begun in you, as David and Peter did, think not that you must cast away your confidence, and expect nothing but wrath from God and Christ, and that you must refuse to be comforted by the grace of Christ, at least for some time ; for thus you would be the more weak, and prone to fall into other sins ; but rather strive to believe more confidently ; that you have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ; and that He is the propitiation for our sins, 1 John ii. 1, 2. And let not the guilt of sin stay at all upon your conscience, but wash it away with all speed, in the fountain of Christ's blood, which is opened for us, that it may be ready for our use on all such incidental occasions ; that so you may be humbled for your sins in a gospel way, and may hate your own sinfulness, and be sorry for it with godly sorrow, out of love to God. Peter might have been ruined forever by denying Christ, as Judas was by betraying Him, if Peter's faith had not been up-

held by the prayer of Christ, Luke xxvi. 31, 32. If a cloud be cast over all your inward qualifications, so that you can see no grace at all in yourselves; yet still trust on Him that justifieth the ungodly, and came to seek and to save them that are lost. If God seem to deal with you as an enemy, by bringing on you some horrible affliction, as He did upon Job, beware of condemning your faith and its fruits, as if they were not acceptable to God; but rather say with holy Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him; but I will maintain mine own ways before Him," Job. xiii. 15. Strive to keep and to increase faith by faith; that is, by acting faith frequently, by trusting on God to keep and to increase it; being confident, that "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," Phil. i. 6.

DIRECTION XII.

Make diligent use of your most holy faith, for the immediate performance of the duties of the law, by walking no longer according to your own natural state, or any principles or means of practice that belong unto it, but only according to that new state which you receive by faith, and the principles and means of practice that properly belong thereunto; and strive to continue and increase in such manner of practice. This is the only way to attain to an acceptable performance of those holy and righteous duties, as far as it is possible in this present life.

EXPLICATION.

HERE I am guiding you to the *manner* of practice, wherein you are to make use of faith, and of all other effectual means of holiness before treated of, which faith lays hold of, for the immediate performance of the law; which is the great end aimed at in this whole treatise.

And therefore this deserves to be diligently considered, as the principal direction, to which all the foregoing and following are subservient. As for the meaning of it, I have already showed, that our old natural state is that which we derive from the first Adam, by natural generation; and it is called, in the Scripture, the old man; and, while we are in it, we are said to be in the flesh. And our new state is that which we receive from the second Adam, Jesus Christ, by being new-born in union and fellowship with Him through faith; and it is called, in Scripture, the new man; and, when we are in it, we are said to be in the Spirit.

The principles and means of practice belonging to a natural state, are such as persons do or may attain and make use of before they are in Christ by faith. Such as belong properly to the new state, are the manifold holy endowments, privileges, and enjoyments, which we partake of in Christ by faith, such as have already appeared to be the only effectual means of a holy life. We are said to walk according to either of these states, or to the principles or means that belong to either of them when we are moved and guided by virtue of them, to such actings as are agreeable to them. Thus kings act according to their state, in commanding authoritatively, and in magnificent bounty; poor men in the way of service and obedience; and children indiscriminately, Esther, i. 7, Prov. xviii. 24, 1 Cor. xiii. 11, so, the manner of practice here directed to, consists in moving and guiding ourselves, in the performance of the works of the law by gospel principles and means. This is the rare and excellent art of godliness, in which every Christian should strive to be skilful and expert. The reason why many come off with shame and confusion, after they have a long time labored with much zeal and industry for the attainment of true godliness, is, because they were never acquainted with this holy art, and never endeavored to practise it in a right gospel way. Some worldly arts are called mysteries; but

above all, this spiritual art of godliness is, without controversy, *a great mystery*, 1 Tim. iii. 16; because the means that are to be made use of in it, are deeply mysterious, as has been showed, and you are not a skilful artist till you know them, and can reduce them to practice. It is a manner of practice far above the sphere of natural ability, such as would never have entered into the hearts of the wisest in the world, if it had not been revealed to us in the Scriptures; and when it is there most plainly revealed, continues a dark riddle to those that are not inwardly enlightened and taught by the holy Spirit; such as many godly persons guided by the Spirit, in some measure walk in, yet but obscurely discern; they can hardly perceive their own knowledge of it, and can hardly give any account to others of the way wherein they walk; as the disciples that walked in Christ, the way to the Father, and yet perceived not that knowledge in themselves: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" John xiv. 5. This is the reason why many poor believers are so weak in Christ, and attain so small a degree of holiness and righteousness. Therefore, that you may the better be acquainted with a mystery of so great importance, I shall show in the first place, that the Holy Scriptures direct you to this manner of practice as alone effectual for the performance of holy duties; and then I shall lay before you some necessary instructions, that you may understand how to walk aright in it, and continue and go forward therein, till you be made perfect in Christ.

For the FIRST of these, the Holy Scriptures are very large and clear, in directing us to this manner of practice, and to continuance and growth therein. And here it is useful for us, to observe the great variety of peculiar words and phrases whereby the Holy Ghost teaches this mystery, which many who frequently read the Scriptures, yea, who pretend to be preachers of the

Gospel, little understand or regard ; showing thereby that the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to them, and that they are not yet acquainted with "the form of sound words," and are strangers to the very language of the Gospel which they profess and pretend to preach. I shall therefore present to your view several of these peculiar words and phrases, whereby this mysterious manner of practice is expressed in the Holy Scriptures, and commended to you as the only way for the sure attainment of all holiness in the heart and life. I shall rank such of them together as agree in sense, that the multitude of them may not produce confusion in your thoughts.

1. This is the manner of practice in Scripture, which is expressed by "living by faith," Hab. ii. 4, Gal. ii. 20, Heb. x. 38 ; "walking by faith," 2 Cor. v. 7 ; "faith working by love," Gal. v. 6 ; "overcoming the world by faith," 1 John v. 4 ; "quenching all the fiery darts of the wicked, by the shield of faith," Eph. vi. 16. Some make no more of "living and walking by faith," than merely a stirring up and encouraging ourselves to our duty by such principles as we believe. Thus the Jews might account that they lived by faith, because they professed and assented to the doctrine of Moses and the prophets, and were moved thereby to "a zeal of God, though they sought righteousness not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law," Rom. ix. 32. Thus Paul might think he lived by faith, while he was a zealous Pharisee : but afterwards he knew, that the life of faith consisted in dying to the law, and living to God ; and that not himself, but Christ lived in him, Gal. ii. 19, 20. As it is one and the same thing, to be justified by faith, and by Christ believed on, Rom. v. 1, so to live, walk, and work by faith, is all one with living, walking, working by means of Christ, and His saving endowments ; which we receive and make use of by faith, to guide and move ourselves to the practice of holiness.

2, The same thing is commended to us by the terms of "walking, rooted, and built up in Christ," Col. ii. 6, 7; "living to God, and not to ourselves, but to have Christ living in us," Gal. ii. 19, 20; "good conversation in Christ," 1 Peter iii. 16; "putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, that we may walk honestly as in the day," Rom. xiii. 13, 14; "being strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" Eph. vi. 10; "doing all things in the name of Christ," Col. iii. 17; "walking up and down in the name of the Lord," Zech. x. 12; "going in the strength of the Lord; making mention of His righteousness, even of His only," Psal. lxxi. 16. These phrases are frequent, and sufficiently explain one another; and show, that we are to practise holiness, not only by virtue of Christ's authority, but also of His strengthening endowments moving us and encouraging us thereunto.

3. It is also signified by the phrases of "being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. ii. 1; "having our conversation in the world, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God," 2 Cor. i. 12; "having or holding fast grace, that we may serve God acceptably, laboring abundantly," in such a manner, as that the whole work is not performed by us, but by the grace of God that is with us, 1 Cor. xv. 10. By grace, therefore, we may well understand, the privileges of our new state given to us in Christ, whereby we ought to be influenced and guided in the performance of holy duties.

4. It is also signified, when we are to "put off the old, and put on the new man;" yea, to continue in so doing, though we have done it in a measure already, and that we avoid our former sinful conversation, Eph. iv. 21, 22, 24; and to avoid sin, because we have put off the old, and put on the new man, Col. iii. 9, 10. I have already showed, that by this twofold man is not meant merely sin and holiness; but, by the former, is meant our natural state, with all its endowments, where-

by we are furnished only to the practice of sin; and, by the latter, our new state in Christ, whereby we are furnished with all means necessary for the practice of holiness.

5. We are to understand the same thing, when we are taught "not to walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit," that we may be "free from the law of sin," and that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us, Rom. viii. 1, 2, 3; and "through the Spirit, to mortify the deeds of the body; and to be led by the Spirit," because we "live by the Spirit," and have "crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts," Gal. v. 24. The Apostle shows, by these expressions, not only that we are to practise holiness, but also by what means we may do it effectually. By the flesh is meant our old nature derived from the first Adam; and by the spirit is meant the Spirit of Christ, and that new nature which we have by Him dwelling in us. We are said to walk after either of these natures, when we make the properties or qualifications of either of them to be the principles of our practice. So, when we are taught to serve in "newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter," that so we may bring forth fruit unto God, the meaning is, that we must endeavor to bring forth the fruits of holiness, not by virtue of the law, that killing letter, to which the flesh is married, and by which the motions of sin are in us; but by virtue of the Spirit, and his manifold riches, which we partake of in our new state, by a mystical marriage with Christ, Rom. vii. 4, 5, 6; and by virtue of such principles as belong to the new state declared in the Gospel, whereby the Holy Spirit is ministered to us.

6. This is the manner of walking which the Apostle Paul directs us unto, when he teaches us by his own example, that the continual work of our lives should be, "to know Christ, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made con-

formable to His death ; if by any means we may attain unto the resurrection of the dead, and to increase and press forward in this kind of knowledge," Phil. iii. 10, 11, 12, 15. Certainly, he means such an experimental knowledge of Christ, and His death and resurrection, as effectually makes us conformable thereunto, in dying unto sin, and living unto God. And he would hereby guide us, to make use of Christ, and His death and resurrection, by faith, as the powerful means of all holiness in heart and life ; and to increase in this manner of walking, until we attain to perfection in Christ.

The SECOND thing proposed, was, to lay before you some necessary instructions, that your steps may be guided aright, to continue and go forward in this way of holiness, until you be made perfect in Christ. And, seeing we are naturally prone to mistake this way, and are utterly unable to find it out, or discern it, by our own reason and understanding, we should the more diligently attend to these instructions taken out of the holy Scriptures. And we should pray earnestly, that God would give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation, that we may discern the way of holiness thereby, and walk aright in it ; according to that gracious promise, "The way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein," Isa. xxxv. 8.

1. Let us observe, and consider diligently, in our whole conversation, that though we are partakers of a new holy state by faith in Christ ; yet our natural state remains, in a measure, with all its corrupt principles and properties. As long as we live in this present world, our apprehension of Christ and His perfection, in this life, is only by faith ; whereas, by sense and reason, we may apprehend much in ourselves, contrary to Christ ; and this faith is imperfect ; so that true believers have cause to pray to God to help their unbelief, Mark ix. 24. Therefore, though we receive a perfect Christ by faith, yet the measure and degree of

enjoying Him is imperfect ; and we hope still, so long as we are in this world, to enjoy him in a higher degree of perfection than we have done. We are yet but weak in Christ, 2 Cor. xiii. 4, children in comparison to the perfection we expect in another world, 1 Cor. xiii. 10, 11, and we must grow still, till we come to the perfect man, Eph. iv. 13 ; and some are weaker babes than others, and have received Christ in so small a measure, that they may be accounted carnal rather than spiritual, 1 Cor. iii. 1. And, because all the blessings and perfections of our new state, as justification, the gift of the Spirit, and of the holy nature, and the adoption of children, are seated and treasured up in Christ, and joined with him inseparably, we can receive them no further than we receive Christ himself by faith ; which we do in an imperfect measure and degree in this life. The apostle Paul proposes himself as a pattern for all those that are perfect in the truth of grace to imitate ; and yet he professes, that he was not yet made so perfect, in the degree or measure of saving endowments, but that he still presses forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, laboring still to apprehend and win Christ more perfectly, and to be found in Him, not having his own righteousness, but that which is of God by faith ; and to gain more experimental knowledge of Christ, and of the fellowship of his sufferings, and the power of his resurrection, being made conformable thereunto, Phil. iii. 8, 10, 14. Believers are justified already ; yet they wait for the hope of righteousness by faith, that is, for the full enjoyment of the righteousness of Christ, Gal. v. 5. They have received but the first fruits of the Spirit, and must wait for a more full enjoyment of it. The Spirit witnesses now to them, that they are the children of God ; and yet they groan within themselves, waiting for more full enjoyment of adoption, Rom. viii. 23. Now, seeing the degree and measure of our reception and enjoyment of Christ, with

all the blessings of our new state in Him, is, in this life, imperfect, it follows clearly, that our contrary natural state, with its properties, remains still in us in some degree, and is not perfectly abolished : so that all believers in this world partake, in some degree, of these two contrary states. Believers have indeed put off the old man, and put on the new man, where Christ is all and in all, Col. iii. 10, 11 ; yet they are to put the old man off, and the new man on, more and more, because the old man still remains in a measure. They are said to be, not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, because their being in the Spirit is their best and lasting state ; as denominations are usually taken from the better part ; but yet the flesh is in them, and they find work enough to mortify the deeds of it, Rom. viii. 9, 13.

Therefore several things which are contrary to each other, are frequently attributed to believers in the Scriptures, with respect to these two contrary states, wherein one place seems to contradict another ; and yet both are true in divers respects. Thus, holy Paul says truly of himself, " I live, yet not I," Gal. ii. 20 ; because he lives to God by Christ living in him ; and yet, in another respect, according to his natural state, he did not live to God. Again, he professes that he was carnal, sold under sin ; and yet, on the contrary, that he allowed not sin, but hated it. He shows how both these were true, concerning himself, in divers respects. He says, " In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing ; and I delight to do the will of God according to the inward man. With the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin," Rom. vii. 14, 15, 18, 22, 25. John says, " He that saith he hath no sin, deceiveth himself, and is a liar," 1 John, i. 8 ; and also that it is true, that " Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin ; for his seed, that is, Christ's, the new spiritual nature, remaineth in him : and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," 1 John iii. 9. It is true, that we are

weak, and can do nothing, and yet strong and able to do all things, 2 Cor. xii. 10, 11, Phil. iv. 13. It is true, that believers are dead because of sin, but alive because of righteousness, Rom. viii. 10; and that when they die by a natural death, they shall never die, John xi. 25, 26. They are sons that have the inheritance by their birthright, and yet in some respects, may differ nothing from servants; and so they may be under the law, in a sense, and yet under grace, and heirs, according to the free promise, at the same time, Gal. iv. 1, 2. They are redeemed from the curse of the law, and have forgiveness of sins, and a promise, that God will never be wroth with them, nor rebuke them any more, Gal. iii. 13, Eph. i. 7, Isa. liv. 9; and yet, on the contrary, the curse written in the law is sometimes poured out upon them, Dan. ix. 11; and they have need still to pray, that God would deliver them from their guiltiness, and forgive their debts, Ps. li. 14, Matt. vi. 12; and they may expect that God will punish them for all their iniquities, Amos iii. 2. These contrary things, asserted concerning believers in Scripture, sufficiently manifest that they partake of two contrary states in this life. And this is a plain, easy, and ready way to reconcile these seeming contradictions, whatever other ways be used to reconcile some of them. And what reason is there to question that the old state remains in believers in some degree, seeing all sound Protestants acknowledge, that the sinful depravation and pollution of our natures, commonly called original sin, which is one principal part of this old state, remains in all as long as they live in this world? Now, though some penal evils may be said to remain in us, yet we cannot suppose that this original pollution is continued in us as considered in Christ, but as considered in our old state, derived from the first Adam. Therefore, the first sin of Adam is imputed, in some respect, even to those that are justified by faith; and they remain, in a measure, as aforesaid, under the punishment and curse

denounced, Gen. ii. 17: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." And, on this account, the same original guilt and pollution is propagated to the children of believing parents, as well as others, by natural generation. And, if such a great and fundamental part of the natural state continue in believers, as subjection to the guilt of the first sin and original corruption, which is one great part of the punishment and death threatened, and by which we are prone and inclined to all actual sins; why should we not judge, that other parts of the same state likewise continue in them, as the guilt of their own actual sins, and subjection to the wrath of God, and the curses and punishments denounced against them in the law? And why should we not judge, that all the miseries of this life, and death itself, are inflicted upon believers, at least in some respect, as punishments of sin? It may be objected, that this doctrine of a twofold state of believers in this life, derogates much from the perfection of our justification by Christ, and from the fulness of all the grace and spiritual blessings of Christ, and from the merits of His death, and the power of His Spirit; and that it greatly diminishes the consolation of believers in Christ. But it may be easily vindicated from this objection, if we understand it rightly; for, notwithstanding this twofold state, it still holds true, that believers, while they are on earth, have all perfections of spiritual blessings, justification, adoption, the gift of the Spirit, holiness, eternal life, and glory in and with Christ, Eph. i. 3. In the person of Christ, who is now in Heaven, the old man is perfectly crucified; they are dead to sin, and to the law and its curse, and they are quickened together with Him, and raised up with Him, and made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. 6. And believers in their own persons receive and enjoy by faith all these perfect spiritual blessings of Christ, as far as they receive and enjoy Christ himself dwelling in them, and no further. Thus far they

are in a new state, free from the guilt, pollution, and punishment of sin, and so from the wrath of God, and all miseries, and death itself, while they are in this world; yea, all the guilt, pollution, and punishment of sin, and all evils whatever which they are subject to according to their natural state, do them no harm according to this new state, but work for their good; and are no evils, but rather advantages to them, tending to the destruction only of the flesh, and to the perfection of the new man in Christ. Yet it holds true also, that our reception and enjoyment of Christ himself, and all His perfections is but in an imperfect measure and degree, until faith be turned into heavenly vision, and fruition of Christ; and therefore our old sinful state, with the evils thereof, is not perfectly abolished during this life. The kingdom of heaven, or the grace of Christ within us, is like leaven in meal, which does not unite itself perfectly to the meal in an instant, but by degrees, until the whole be leavened, Matt. xiii. 33; or like the morning light, that expels darkness by degrees, shining more and more unto the perfect day, Prov. iv. 18. This cannot be justly accounted any derogation from the merits of Christ's death, or from the power of his Spirit, seeing Christ never intended to bring to pass, by his death, or by the power of his Spirit, that we should enjoy His spiritual blessings any further than we are in Him, and enjoy Him by faith; or that we should be made holy or happy according to the flesh by a reformation of our natural state; as has been shown. Neither does this diminish the consolation of believers in Christ; for thereby they may know that they have the perfection of grace and happiness in Christ, and that they enjoy it in this world, as far as they enjoy Christ himself by faith; and that they shall enjoy it in a perfect measure, and be fully freed from their sinful and miserable state, when that frame of nature, which they received from the first Adam, is dissolved by death.

This instruction is very useful to frame our souls aright for the practice of holiness by those gospel principles and means alone that belong to our new state, which we are partakers of by faith in Christ. And thus it is easily vindicated from another great objection, wherein the Papists and Quakers do much triumph. They appeal to men's consciences to answer this question: Which doctrine is most likely to bring people to the practice of true godliness—theirs, which teaches, that perfect holiness may be attained in this life, or ours, which teaches, that it is impossible for us to keep the law perfectly, and to purge ourselves from all sin, as long as we live in this world, though we use our best endeavors? They think that common reason will make the verdict pass for them against our doctrine, as that which discourages all endeavors for perfection, and hardens the hearts of people, to allow themselves in sin, because they cannot avoid it. But, on the contrary, the doctrine of perfectionists hardens people, to allow themselves in sin, and to call evil good; as the Papists account, that the concupiscence of the flesh against the spirit, is no sin, but rather good matter for the exercise of their virtues, because the most perfect in this life are not without it. It also discourages those who labor to get holiness in the right way, by faith in Christ, and makes them to think that they labor in vain, because they find themselves still sinful, and far from perfection, when they have done their best to attain it. It hinders our diligence in seeking holiness by those principles and means whereby only it can be found; for who will be diligent and watchful to avoid walking according to his own carnal principles, if he think that his own carnal state, with its principles, is quite abolished, and is out of him, so that at present he is in no danger of walking according to them? Whatever good works the doctrine of the perfectionists may serve to promote, I am sure it hinders a great part of that work which Christ would have us to be employed

in as long as we live in this world. We must know, that our old state, with its evil principles, continues still, in a measure, or else we shall not be fit for the great duties of confessing our sins, loathing ourselves for them, praying earnestly for the pardon of them, sorrowing for them with a godly sorrow, accepting the punishment of our sins, and giving God the glory of his justice, and offering to Him the sacrifice of a broken and contrite spirit, being poor in spirit, working out our salvation with fear and trembling. Some have doubted, how it can consist with our justification by Christ, that we should be still liable to be punished for our sins, and obliged to pray for the pardon of them; because they have not well considered the twofold state of believers in this life. And, except we know this, and keep it in mind, we shall never be fit to practise continually the great duties that tend to the putting off the old man, and putting on the new man, and mortifying the deeds of the body by the Spirit; praying continually, that God would renew a right spirit in us, and sanctify us throughout; pressing forward to perfection, desiring the sincere milk of the word, and the enjoyment of other ordinances. Christ has appointed, that His church on earth should be employed in such works: and perfectionists either do, or fain would account them needless for them, and that they have no longer need of Christ himself, to be their spiritual physician and advocate with the Father, and the propitiation for their sins; therefore they are not fit to be members of the church on earth, and never are likely to be members of the church in heaven, except they can make a ladder, and climb up thither before their time.

2. Despair of purging the flesh or natural man of its sinful lusts and inclinations, and of practising holiness, by your willing and resolving to do the best in your power, and trusting in the grace of God and Christ to help you in such resolutions and endeavors: but rather resolve to trust on Christ, to work in you to will and to

do by His own power, according to His own good pleasure. They who are convinced of their own sin and misery, commonly first think to tame the flesh, and to subdue and root out its lusts, and to make their corrupt nature better, and inclined to holiness, by their struggling and wrestling with it ; and, if they can but bring their hearts to a full purpose and resolution to do the best that lies in them, they hope, that, by such a resolution, they shall be able to achieve great enterprises in the conquest of their lusts, and the performance of the most difficult duties. It is the great work of some zealous divines, in their preaching and writings, to stir up people to this resolution, wherein they place the chief turning point from sin to godliness. And they think, that this is not contrary to the life of faith, because they trust on the grace of God through Christ, to help them in all such resolutions and endeavors. Thus they endeavor to reform their old state, and to be made perfect in the flesh, instead of putting it off, and walking according to the new state in Christ. They trust on low carnal things for holiness, and upon the acts of their own will, their purposes, resolutions, and endeavors, instead of Christ ; and they trust on Christ, to help them in this carnal way ; whereas, true faith would teach them that they are nothing, and that they do but labor in vain. They may as well attempt to wash the Ethiopian white, as purge the flesh or natural man from its evil lusts, and make it pure and holy. It is desperately wicked, past all cure. It will unavoidably lust against the Spirit of God, even in the best saints on earth, Gal. v. 17. Its mind is enmity to the law of God, and neither is, nor can be subject to it, Rom. viii. 7. They that would cure it, and make it holy, by their own resolutions and endeavors, act quite contrary to the design of Christ's death ; for he died, not that the flesh, or old natural man, might be made holy ; but that it might be crucified, and destroyed out of us, Rom. vi. 6 ; and that we might live to

God, not to ourselves, or by any natural power of our own resolutions and endeavors, but by Christ living in us, and by His Spirit bringing forth the fruits of righteousness in us, Gal. ii. 20, and v. 24, 25. Therefore we must be content to leave the natural man vile and wicked, as we found it, until it be utterly abolished by death; though we must not *allow* its wickedness, but rather groan to be delivered from the body of this death; thanking God that there is a deliverance through Jesus Christ our Lord. Our way to mortify sinful affections and lusts, must be, not by purging them out of the flesh, but by putting off the flesh itself, and getting above into Christ by faith, and walking in that new nature that is by Him. Thus "the way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath," Prov. xv. 24. Our willing, resolving, and endeavoring, must be, to do the best, not that lies in ourselves, or in our own power, but that Christ and the power of His Spirit shall be pleased to work in us: for in us, that is, in our flesh, "there dwelleth no good thing," Rom. vii. 18. We have great ground to trust in God and Christ for help in such resolutions and endeavors after holiness, as in things that are agreeable to the design of Christ in our redemption, and to the way of acting and living by faith. It is likely, that Peter sincerely resolved to die with Christ, rather than to deny Him, and to do all that he could by his own power for that end; but Christ made him quickly see the weakness and vanity of such resolutions. And we see by experience, what many resolutions made in sickness and other dangers mostly come to. It is not enough for us to trust on Christ, to help us to act and endeavor so far only as creatures; for so the worst of men are helped: He is the JEHOVAH in whom they live, move, and have their being, Acts xvii. 28. And it is likely the Pharisee would trust on God, to help him in duty, as he would thank God for the performance of duty, Luke xviii. 11. And this is all the faith that many make use

of in order to a holy practice. But we must trust on Christ, to enable us, above the strength of our own natural power, by virtue of the new nature which we have in Christ, and by His Spirit dwelling and working in us ; or else our best endeavors will be altogether sinful, and mere hypocrisy, notwithstanding all the help for which we trust upon Him. We must also take heed of depending for holiness upon any resolution to walk in Christ, or any written covenants, or any holiness that we have already received ; for we must know, that the virtue of these things continues no longer than we continue walking in Christ, and Christ in us. They must be kept up by the continual presence of Christ in us ; as light is maintained by the presence of the sun, and cannot subsist without it.

3. You must not seek to procure forgiveness of sins, the favor of God, a new holy nature, life, and happiness, by any works of the moral law, or by any rites and ceremonies whatever ; but rather you must work as those that have all these things already, according to your new state in Christ ; as such who are only to receive them more and more by faith, as they are ready prepared and treasured up for you, and freely given to you, in your spiritual head, the Lord Jesus Christ. If we walk as those that are yet wholly to seek for the procurement of such enjoyments as these, it is a manifest sign, that, at present, we judge ourselves to be without them, and without Christ himself, in whose fulness they are all contained : and therefore we walk according to our old natural state, as those who are yet in the flesh, and who would get salvation in it, and by our carnal works and observances, instead of living altogether on Christ by faith. This practice is according to the tenor of the covenant of works ; as I have before showed. And we have no ground to trust on Christ and His Spirit, to work holiness in us this way ; for we are dead to the legal covenant by the body of Christ, Rom. vii. 4 ; and “ if we be led by the

Spirit, we are not under the law," Gal. v. 18. When the Galatians were seduced by false teachers, to seek the procurement of justification and life by circumcision, and other works of the Mosaical law, the Apostle Paul rebukes them for seeking to be made perfect in the flesh, directly contrary to their good beginning in the Spirit, for rendering Christ of none effect to them, and for falling from grace, Gal. iii. 3, and v. 4. And, when some of the Colossians sought perfection in the like manner, by the observance of circumcision, holy meats, holy times, and other rudiments of the world, the same Apostle blamed them for not holding the head Jesus Christ, and as not being dead and risen with Christ, but living merely in the world, Col. ii. 19, 20, and iii. 1. He clearly showed, that those who seek any saving enjoyments in such a way, walk according to their old natural state; and that the true manner of living by faith in Christ, is, to walk as those that have all fulness and perfection of spiritual blessings in Christ by faith, and need not seek for any other way to procure them for themselves. In this sense it is a true saying; that believers should not act *for* life, but *from* life. They must act as those that are not procuring life by their works, but who have already received and derived life from Christ, and act from the power and virtue received from Him. And hereby it appears, that the Papists, and all others that think to justify, purify, sanctify, and save themselves by any of their own works, rites, or ceremonies whatever, walk in a carnal way, as those that are without any present interest in Christ, and shall never attain to holiness or happiness, until they learn a better way of religion.

4. Think not, that you can effectually incline your heart to the immediate practice of holiness, by any such practical principles, as only serve to bind, press, and urge you to the performance of holy duties; but, rather let such principles stir you up, to go to Christ

first by faith, that you may be effectually inclined to the immediate practice of holiness in Him by gospel principles, that strengthen and enable you, as well as oblige you thereto. There are some practical principles, that only bind, press, and urge us to holy duties. by showing the reasonableness, equity, and necessity of our obedience, without showing at all, how we that are by nature dead in sin, under the wrath of God, may have any strength and ability for the performance of them : as, for instance, the authority of God the lawgiver ; our absolute dependence on Him as our Creator, Preserver, Governor, in whose hand is our life, breath, and all our happiness here and forever ; His all-seeing eye, that searches our heart, discerns our very thoughts and secret purposes ; His exact justice, in rendering to all according to their works ; His almighty and eternal power, to reward those that obey Him, and to punish transgressors forever ; the unspeakable joy of heaven, and the terrible damnation of hell. Such principles as these bind our consciences very strictly, and work very strongly upon the prevalent affections of hope and fear, to press and urge our hearts to the performance of holy duties, if we believe them assuredly, and work them earnestly upon our hearts, by frequent, serious, lively meditation. And, therefore, some account them the most forcible and effectual means to form any virtue in the soul, and to bring it to immediate performance of any duty, however difficult ; and that the life of faith consists principally in our living to God in holiness, by a constant belief and meditation on them. And they account those things that serve to remind them of such principles, very effectual for holiness ; as, looking on the picture of death, or on a death's-head ; keeping a coffin by them ready made ; walking about among the graves, &c. But this is not that manner of living to God of which the Apostle speaks, when he says, " I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I

live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me," Gal. ii. 20. If a man make use of these impelling principles, to stir him to go to Christ for strength to act bodily, he walks like one that has received Christ as his only life by faith: otherwise he walks like other natural men. For the natural man may be brought to act by these principles, partly by natural light, and more fully by Scripture light, without any true knowledge of the way of salvation by Christ, and as if Christ had never come into the world. And he may be strictly bound by them, and vehemently urged and pressed to holy duties; and yet, all this while, is left to his own natural strength, or rather weakness, being not assured by any of these principles that God would give him strength to help him in the performance of these duties; and can do nothing aright, until he get new life and strength by Christ, by a more precious, saving faith. There would be no need of a new life and strength by Christ, if these principles were sufficient to bring us to a holy conversation. Therefore this manner of practice is no better than walking after the flesh, according to our corrupt state, and seeking to be made perfect in the flesh. No question but Paul was very diligent in it while he was a blind Pharisee. Yea, the heathen philosophers might attain to it, in some measure, by the light of common reason. The devils have such principles, as they believe assuredly; yet they are never the better for them. It is a part of the natural wisdom whereby the world knew not God, not that wisdom of God in a mystery, discovered in the Gospel, which is the only satisfying wisdom and power of God unto salvation. What can you produce by corruption, by pressing with motives to holiness, one who has no soundness in him, from the sole of the foot, even to the head, only wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores. He that is made truly sensible of his own vileness and deadness by nature, will despair of ever bringing him-

self to holiness by principles that afford him no life and strength, but only lay an obligation upon him, and urge and press him to duty. What are mere obligations to one that is dead in sin? While the soul is without spiritual life, sin is the more moved and enraged by pressing and urging upon the soul the obligations of the law, and its commands. "The motions of sin are by the law; and sin taking occasion by the commandment, worketh in us all manner of concupiscence," Rom. vii. 5, 8. And yet these impelling principles are very good and excellent in the right gospel use of them; as the Apostle says of the law, that it is good, if it be used lawfully, 1 Tim. i. 8. The humbled sinner knows well his obligations; but it is life and strength that he wants, and he despairs of walking according to such obligations, until he get this life and strength by faith in Christ. Therefore these obligatory principles move him to go, in the first place, to Christ, that so he may be enabled to answer their end, by the strengthening and enlivening principles of God's grace in Christ. Some there are that make use of gospel principles, only to oblige and urge to duty, without affording any life and strength for the performance; as they that think that Christ died and rose again to establish a new covenant of works for our salvation, and to give us a pattern of good works by his own obedience, rather than to purchase life, obedience, and good works for us. Such as these do not understand and receive the principles of the Gospel rightly; but they pervert and abuse them, contrary to their true nature and design; and thereby render them as ineffectual for their sanctification, as any other natural or legal principles.

5. Stir up and strengthen yourself, to perform the duties of holiness, by a firm persuasion of your enjoyment of Jesus Christ, and of all spiritual and everlasting benefits through Him. Set not yourselves upon the performance of the law, with any prevailing

thoughts or apprehensions, that you are yet without an interest in Christ, and in the love of God through Him; under the curse of the law, the power of sin and Satan, having no better portion than this present world; no better strength, than that which is in the purposes and resolutions of your own free will. While such thoughts as these prevail, and influence your actions, it is evident, that you walk according to the principles and practices of your old natural state; and you will be moved thereby, to yield to the dominion of sin and Satan, to withdraw yourselves from God and godliness, as Adam was moved, from the sight of his own nakedness, to hide himself from God, Gen. iii. 10. Therefore your way to a holy practice, is, first to conquer and expel such unbelieving thoughts, by trusting confidently on Christ, and persuading yourselves by faith, that His righteousness, Spirit, glory, and all His spiritual benefits, are yours; and that He dwells in you, and you in Him. In the might of this confidence, you shall go forth to the performance of the law; and you will be strong against sin and Satan, and able to do all things through Christ who strengthens you. This confident persuasion is of great necessity to the right framing and disposing our hearts to walk according to our new state in Christ. The life of faith principally consists in it. And herein it eminently appears, that faith is a hand, not only to receive Christ, but also to work by Him; and that it cannot be effectual for our sanctification, except it contain in it some assurance of our interest in Christ; as has been showed. Thus we act as those that are above the sphere of nature, advanced to union and fellowship with Christ. The Apostle maintained in his heart a persuasion that Christ had loved him, and given Himself for him; and hereby he was enabled to live to God in holiness, through Christ living in him by faith. He teaches us also, that we must maintain the like persuasion, if we would walk holily in Christ. We must know, that our old man is

crucified with Him: and we must reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. vi. 6, 11. This is the means whereby we may be filled with the Spirit, strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might; which God would not require of us, if He had not appointed the means, Eph. vi. 20. Christ himself walked in a constant persuasion of His excellent state; He set the Lord always before him, and was persuaded that, because God was at His right hand, he should not be moved, Ps. xvi. 8. How should it be rationally expected, that a man should act according to this new state, without assurance that he is in it? It is a rule of common prudence in all worldly callings and conditions, that every one must know and well consider his own state, lest he should act proudly above it, or sordidly below it. And it is a hard thing to bring some to a right estimate of their own worldly condition. If the same rule were observed in spiritual things, doubtless the knowledge and persuasion of the glory and excellency of our new state in Christ, would more elevate the hearts of believers above all sordid slavery to their lusts, and enlarge them to run cheerfully in the way of God's commandments. If Christians knew their own strength better, they would undertake greater things for the glory of God. But this knowledge is with difficulty attained; it is only by faith and spiritual illumination. The best know but in part; and hence it is, that the conversation of believers falls so much below their holy and heavenly calling.

6. Consider what endowments, privileges, or properties of your new state are most proper and forcible to incline and strengthen your heart to love God above all, and to renounce all sin, and to give up yourself to universal obedience to His commands: and strive to walk in the persuasion of them, that you may attain to the practice of these great duties. I may well join these together, because, to love the Lord with all

our heart, might, and soul, is the first and great commandment, which influences us to all obedience, with a hatred and detestation of all sin, as it is contrary and hateful to God. The same effectual means that produces the one, will also produce the other; and holiness chiefly consists in these. So, the chief blessings of our holy state are most meet and forcible to enable us for the immediate performance of them, and are to be made use of to this end by faith. Particularly, you must believe steadfastly, that all your sins are blotted out, and that you are reconciled to God, and have access into His favor by the blood of Christ, and that He is your God and Father, and altogether love to you, and your all-sufficient everlasting portion and happiness through Christ. Such apprehensions as these, present God as a very lovely object to our hearts, and thereby allure and win our affections, that cannot be forced by commands or threatenings, but must be sweetly won and drawn by allurements. We must not harbor any suspicions that God would prove a terrible, everlasting enemy to us, if we would love Him; for there is no fear in love; but perfect love love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment: he that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love Him, because He first loved us, 1 John iv. 18, 19. David loved the Lord, because he was persuaded, that He was his strength, rock, fortress, his God, and the horn of his salvation, Ps. xviii. 1, 2. Love that causes obedience to the law, must proceed from a good conscience purged from sin; and this good conscience must proceed from faith unfeigned, whereby we apprehend the remission of our sins, and our reconciliation with God by the merits of the blood of Christ, 1 Tim. i. 5, Heb. ix. 14. For the same end, that your hearts may be rightly fitted and framed for the performance of these principal duties, the Holy Scripture directs you to walk in the persuasion of other principal endowments of your new state; as that you “have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son

Jesus Christ," 1 John i. 3 ; that you are the temple of the living God, 2 Cor. vi. 16 ; that you live by the Spirit, Gal. v. 25 ; that you are called to "holiness, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works ; that God would sanctify you wholly and make you perfect in holiness at the last," 1 Thess. v. 23, Eph. ii. 10 ; "that your old man is crucified with Christ;" and through Him "you are dead unto sin, and alive unto God ; and being made free from sin, you are become the servants of righteousness, and have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life," Rom. vi. 6, 22. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life shall appear, then shall ye appear with Him in glory," Col. iii. 3, 4. Such persuasions as these, when they are deeply rooted and constantly maintained in our hearts, strongly arm and encourage us to practise universal obedience, in opposition to every sinful lust ; because we look upon it, not only as our duty, but our great privilege, to do all things through Christ strengthening us ; and God certainly works in us both to will and to do by these principles, because they properly belong to the Gospel, or New Testament, which is the ministration of the Spirit, and the power of God unto salvation, 2 Col. iii. 6, 8, Rom. i. 16.

7. For the performance of other duties of the law, you are to consider, not only these endowments, privileges, and properties of your new state, which are meet and forcible to enable you to the love of God, and universal obedience, but also those that have a peculiar force and aptitude suitable to the special nature of such duties ; and you must endeavor to assure yourselves of them by faith, that you may be encouraged and strengthened to perform the duties. I shall give you some instances of this manner of practice in several duties, whereby you may better understand how to guide yourselves in the rest. And, as to the duties of the first table, if you would draw near to God in a duty of His worship with a true heart, you must do it in

full assurance of faith concerning your enjoyment of Christ and His salvation. And would you perform the great duty of trusting on the Lord with all your heart, casting your care upon Him, and committing the disposal of yourself to Him in all your concerns? persuade yourself through Christ, that God, according to His promise, will never fail you nor forsake you; that He takes a fatherly care of you; that He will withhold no good thing from you; and will make all things to work for your good. And thus you will be strong and courageous in the practice of this duty; whereas, if you live in a mere suspense concerning your interest in the privileges, you will be subject to carnal fears, and carking cares, in despite of your heart; and you will be prone to trust on the arm of flesh, though your conscience tell you plainly, that, in so doing, you incur the heinous guilt of idolatry. Would you be strengthened to submit to the hand of God with a cheerful patience, in bearing any affliction, and death itself? the way to fortify yourselves, is, to believe assuredly, that your afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; that Christ is your gain in death and life; that His grace is sufficient for you, and His strength made perfect in your weakness; and that He will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; and will at last make you more than conquerors over all evil. Until you attain to such persuasions as these, you will be prone to fret and murmur under the burden of affliction, and to use indirect means to deliver yourselves, notwithstanding the clearest convictions to the contrary. Would you limit yourselves to the observance of God's own institutions in His worship? believe that you are complete in Christ, and have all perfection of spiritual blessings in Him; and that God will build you up in Christ by the ordinances of His own appointment. This will make you account His ordinances sufficient, and men's traditions and inventions needless in the worship

of God ; whereas, if you do not apprehend all fulness in Christ, you will be like the Papists, prone to catch at every straw, and to multiply superstitious observances without end, for the supply of your spiritual wants. Would you confess your sins to God, pray to Him, and praise Him heartily for His benefits ? would you praise Him for affliction, as well as prosperity ? believe assuredly, that God is faithful and just to forgive your sin through Christ ; that you are made a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praises, that are acceptable to God through Christ ; and that God hears your prayers, and will fulfil them, so far as they are good for you ; and that all God's ways are mercy and truth toward you, whether He prosper or afflict you in this life. If you be altogether in doubt, or otherwise persuaded, concerning these privileges, all your confessions, prayers, and praises will be but heartless lip-labors, slavish or pharisaical works. In like manner, you will be enabled to hear and receive the word as the word of God, and to meditate on it with delight ; and you will be willing to know the strictness and spirituality of the commands of God, and to try and examine your ways impartially by them, if you believe assuredly that the word is the power of God unto salvation ; and that Christ is your great Physician, willing and able to heal you, be the case ever so bad ; and, where your sin abounds, His grace towards you doth so much the more abound : whereas, without these comfortable apprehensions, all the works of hearing, meditation, self-examination, will be but uncouth, heartless works, and they will be performed negligently, and by halves, or hypocritically, and out of slavish fear, with much reluctance, without any good-will, or readiness of mind. So also, for the right receiving the sacraments, you will find yourself much strengthened by believing that you may have communion with God and Christ in them, and that you have a great High Priest to bear the iniquity of your holy

things, and to make you forever accepted before the Lord.

In the same way you are to apply yourselves to all duties towards your neighbor, required in the second table of the law, by acting in a persuasion of such privileges of your new state as have a peculiar force to encourage and strengthen you for the performance of them. That you may love your neighbor as yourself, and do to him in all things as you would he should do to you, without partiality and self-seeking; that you may give him his due honor, and abstain from injuring him in his life, chastity, worldly estate, or good name, or from coveting anything that is his, according to the several commands in the second table of the decalogue you must walk in a persuasion, not only that these things are just and equitable toward your fellow-creatures, and that you are strictly bound to the performance of them; but that they are the will of your heavenly Father, who has begotten you according to His own image in righteousness and true holiness, and has given you His Spirit, that you may be like-minded to Him in all things; and that they are the mind of Christ who dwelleth in you, and you in Him; that God and Christ are kind, tender-hearted, long-suffering, full of goodness to men, whether good or bad, friends or enemies, poor or rich; and that Christ came into the world not to destroy but to save; and that you are of the same spirit; that the injuries done to you by your neighbors, can do you no harm; and you need not seek any good for yourselves by injuring them, because you have all desirable happiness in Christ; and all things, though intended by your enemies for your hurt, certainly work for your good through Christ. Such apprehensions as these, wrought in us by the spirit of faith, certainly beget in us a right frame of spirit, thoroughly furnished for every good work toward our neighbor. Likewise, your hearts will be purified to unfeigned love of the brethren in Christ, and you will

walk toward them with all lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, if you maintain a steadfast belief and persuasion of those manifold bonds of love whereby you are inseparably joined with them through Christ; as particularly, that there is one body and one spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Finally, you will be able to abstain from all fleshly and worldly lusts, that war against the soul, and hinder all godliness, by an assured persuasion, not merely, that gluttony, drunkenness, lechery, are filthy, swinish abominations; and that the pleasures, profits, and honors of the world, are vain, empty things; but that you are crucified to the flesh and the world, and are quickened and raised, and sit in heavenly places together with Christ; and that you have pleasures, profits, and honors in Christ, to which the best things in the world are not worthy to be compared; and that you are members of Christ, the temple of His Spirit, citizens of heaven, children of the day, not of the night, nor of darkness, so that it is below your state and dignity to practise deeds of darkness, and to mind fleshly, worldly things. Thus I have given instances enough, to stir you up to acquaint yourself with the manifold endowments, privileges, and properties of your new state in Christ, as they are discovered in the gospel of your salvation, whereby the new nature is fitted for holy operations; as the common nature of man is furnished with the endowments necessary for those functions and operations to which it is designed: and also to stir you up, to make use of them by faith, as they serve to strengthen you either for universal obedience, or for particular duties. And, by this manner of walking, your hearts will be comforted, and established in every good word and work; and you will grow in holiness, until you attain to perfection in Jesus Christ.

8. If you endeavor to grow in grace, and in all holi-

ness, trust assuredly that God will enable you, by this manner of walking, to do everything that is necessary for His glory, and your own everlasting salvation; and that He will graciously accept of that obedience through Christ, which you are enabled to perform according to the measure of your faith, and will pardon your failings, though you offend in many things, and fall short of many others, as to degrees of holiness and high acts of obedience. And, therefore, attempt not the performance of duty in any other way, though you cannot yet do as much as you would in this way. This is a necessary instruction to establish us in the life of faith, that the sense of our manifold failings and defects may not move us, either to despair, or to return to the use of carnal principles and means for help against our corruptions, as accounting this way of living and acting by faith to be insufficient for our sanctification and salvation. The apostle Paul exhorts the Galatians to walk in the Spirit, though the flesh lusts against the spirit, so that they cannot do the things that they would, Gal. v. 16, 17. We are to know, that though the law requires of us the utmost perfection of holiness, yet the Gospel makes an allowance for our weakness, and Christ is so meek and lowly in heart that he accepts of that which our weak faith can attain to by His grace, and does not exact or expect any more of us for His glory and our salvation, until we grow stronger in grace. God showed His great indulgence to his people under the Old Testament, that Moses, the law-giver, suffered them, because of the hardness of their hearts, to put away their wives, though from the beginning it was not so, Matt. xix. 8; and also in tolerating the customary practice of polygamy. Though Christ will not tolerate the continuance of such practices in his church, since his Spirit is more plentifully poured forth under the Gospel; yet He is as forward as ever to bear with the failings of His weak saints that desire to obey Him sincerely. We have another in-

stance of God's indulgence, more full to our present purpose, in His commanding that the fearful and faint-hearted should not be forced to enter into battle against their enemies, but suffered to return home to their houses ; though fighting in battle against their enemies, without fear and faint-heartedness, was a duty that God did much exercise his people in at that time, Deut. xx. 3, 8. So, under the Gospel, though it be an eminent part of Christ's service, to endure the greatest fight of afflictions, and death itself courageously, for His name's sake ; yet if any be so weak in faith, that they have not sufficient courage to venture into the battle, no doubt but Christ allows them to make use of any honest means whereby they may escape the hands of persecutors, with safety to their holy profession. He will accept them in this weaker kind of service, and will approve of them more than if they should hazard a denial of His name, by venturing themselves upon the trial of martyrdom, when they might have escaped it. Peter came off with sin and shame, by venturing beyond the measure of his faith, into the hands of his persecutors, when he went after Christ to the high priest's hall ; whereas, he should rather have made use of that indulgent dismissal that Christ gave to him and the rest of his disciples : " Let these go their way," John xviii. 8. Christ deals with his people as a good careful shepherd, that will not overdrive his sheep : " He shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young," Isa. xl. 11. He would not have His disciples urged rigorously upon the duty of fasting, when their spirits were unfit for it ; because He knew that imposing duties above their strength, is like putting a new piece of cloth into an old garment, and new wine into old bottles, which spoils all at last, Matt. ix. 14, 15, 16, 17. That precept of Solomon, " Be not righteous overmuch," Eccl. vii. 16, is very useful and necessary, if rightly understood. We are

to beware of being too rigorous in exacting righteousness of ourselves and others, beyond the measure of faith and grace. Overdoing commonly proves undoing. Children that venture on their feet beyond their strength, have many a fall; and so have babes in Christ, when they venture unnecessarily upon such duties as are beyond the strength of their faith. We should be content at present to do the best that we can, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, though we know that others are enabled to do much better; and we are not to despise the day of small things, but to praise God that He works in us anything that is well pleasing in His sight, hoping that He will sanctify us throughout, and bring us at last to perfection of holiness through Jesus Christ our Lord. And we should carefully observe in all things that good lesson of the Apostle, "Not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith," Rom. xii. 3.

DIRECTION XIII.

Endeavor diligently to make the right use of any means appointed in the word of God, for the obtaining and practising holiness, only in this way of believing in Christ, and walking in Him, according to your new state by faith.

EXPLICATION.

THIS might have been added to the instructions in the explication of the former direction, because its use is the same to guide us in the mysterious manner of practising holiness in Christ, by the life of faith; but the weight and comprehensiveness of it, makes it

worthy to be treated of by itself, as a distinct direction. Two things are observable in it.

First, That, though all holiness be effectually attained by the life of faith in Christ, yet the use of any means appointed in the word for attaining and promoting holiness, is not hereby made void, but rather established. This is needful to be observed against the pride and ignorance of some professors of the Gospel, who being puffed up with a conceit of their feigned faith, imagine themselves to be in such a state of perfection, that they are above all ordinances, except singing hallelujahs; and also against the Papists, who run into the contrary extreme by heaping together a multitude of means of holiness, which God never commanded, neither ever came they into His heart, and who slander the Protestant doctrine of faith and free grace, as if it tended to destroy all diligent use of the means of holiness and salvation, and to breed up a company of lazy Solifidians. We indeed assert and profess, that a true and lively faith in Christ, is alone sufficient and effectual, through the grace of God, to receive Christ and all His fulness, so far as it is necessary in this life for our justification, sanctification, and eternal salvation; but yet we also assert and profess, that several means are appointed of God for begetting, maintaining and increasing this faith, and acting and exercising it, in order to the attainment of its end; and that these means are to be used diligently, which are mentioned in the sequel. True believers find by experience, that their faith needs such helps; and they who think themselves above any need of them, reject the counsel of God against themselves, like those proud Pharisees and lawyers, who thought it a thing beneath them, and refused to be baptized of John, Luke vii. 30. Yet we account no means necessary or lawful to be used for the attainment of holiness, besides those that are appointed by God in his word. We know

that holiness is a part of our salvation ; and therefore, they who think men may or can invent any means effectually for the attainment of it, ascribe their salvation partly to men and rob God of His glory in being our only Saviour ; and they thereby plainly show, that though they “ draw nigh unto God with their mouth, and honor Him with their lips ; yet their hearts are far from Him. And in vain do they worship Him, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,” Matt. xv. 7, 8, 9.

The SECOND thing observable, and principally designed in this direction is, “ the right manner of using all the means of holiness,” for the obtaining and practising it in no other way besides that of believing in Christ, and walking in Him according to our new state by faith ; which has been already demonstrated to be the only way whereby we may effectually attain to this great end. We must use them as helps to the life of faith, in its beginning, continuance and growth ; and as instruments subservient to faith, the principal instrument, in all its acts and exercises, whereby the soul receives Christ and walks in all holiness by Him. We must beware, lest we rather use them in opposition than in subordination to the way of sanctification and salvation by free grace in Christ, through faith ; and lest, by our abuse of them, they be made rather hinderances than helps to our faith. We must not idolize any of the means, and put them in the place of Christ, as the Papists do, by trusting in them ; as if they were effectual to confer grace on the soul, by the work that is done in the use of them. Neither may we use them as works of righteousness, to be performed as conditions for procuring the favor of God, and the salvation of Christ. Neither must they be accounted so absolutely necessary to salvation ; as if a true faith were void and of none effect, when we are debarred from the enjoyment of several of them. The Holy Scrip-

tures, with all the means of grace appointed therein, are able to make us wise unto salvation, no other way than by faith in Jesus Christ, 2 Tim. iii. 15. And therefore our wise endeavor must be, not to use them in any opposition to the grace of God in Christ. For God's ordinances are like the cherubim of glory, made with their faces looking towards the mercy-seat. They are made to guide us to Christ for salvation by faith alone. If any turn them to another use, it is a great violation of divine institutions: as if any sacrilegious person had presumed to turn the faces of the cherubim from the mercy-seat some other way. This right use of the means of grace, is a point wherein many are ignorant, who use them with great zeal and diligence: and thereby they not only lose their labor, and the benefit of the means, but also they wrest and pervert them to their own destruction. The Jews under the law of Moses, enjoyed many more ordinances of divine worship than we do under the Gospel: but their table became their snare, and they fell miserably from God and Christ, because the "veil of ignorance was upon their hearts," that they could not look to the end of those ordinances, even to the Lord Jesus Christ; and they sought not salvation by faith, but by the ordinances, as works of righteousness, and by others works of the law; for "they stumbled at the stumbling stone," Rom. ix. 13, 32, and x. 4, 5; 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14. That you may not stumble and fall by the same pernicious error, I shall show particularly how several of the principal means of holiness appointed in the Word of God, are to be made use of in that right manner expressed in the direction.

1. We must endeavor diligently to know the word of God contained in the Holy Scripture, and to improve it to this end, that we may be made wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. iii. 15. Other means of salvation are necessary to the more abundant well-being of our faith, and of our new

state in Christ ; but this is absolutely necessary to the very being thereof ; because faith comes by hearing the word of God, and receives Christ as manifested by the word ; as I have before proved.

Rahab, the Canaanite, was justified by faith, before she had any visible communion with the church in any of God's ordinances ; yet not without the word of God, even the same word, for substance, which was written in the Scriptures, and was then extant in the books of Moses ; though that word was not brought to her by any book of holy Scripture, nor by the preaching of any holy minister, but by the report of the heathens, John ii. 9, 11. But here our great work must be, to get such a knowledge of the word, as is necessary and sufficient to guide us in receiving Christ, and walking in Him by faith. You must not be of their minds who think the knowledge of the ten commandments sufficient to salvation, or who would have mysteries to remain hid from the understanding of the vulgar, and nothing to be preached to them but what they can readily assent to, and receive by the light that is in all men : of which mind, it may be, some ministers are, who unwittingly agree with the Quakers in a fundamental point of their heresy. But you must endeavor chiefly, to know the mystery of the Father and the Son, as it is discovered in the Gospel, wherein are hid all treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col. ii. 2, 3, which to know is life eternal, and ignorance of it is death eternal, John xviv. 3, 2 Cor. iv. 3. You must know, that "Christ is the end of the law," Rom. x. 4 ; and therefore you must endeavor to know the commands of the law ; not that you may be enabled, by that knowledge, to practise them immediately, and so to procure salvation by your works ; but rather that, by your knowledge of them, you may be made sensible of your inability to perform them, and of the enmity that is in your heart against them, and the wrath that you are under for breaking them, and the impossibility of being saved by your own works ;

that so you may fly to Christ for refuge, and trust only to the free grace of God for justification, and strength to fulfil the law acceptably through Christ in your conversation. And, for this end, you must endeavor to learn the utmost strictness of the commands, the exact perfection and spiritual purity which they require, that you may be the more convinced of sin, and stirred up to seek unto Christ for remission of sin, for purity of heart, and spiritual obedience, and be brought nearer to the enjoyment of Him; as Christ testifies, that the Scribe who understood the greatness of that command of “loving the Lord with all the heart and soul, was not far from the kingdom of God,” Matt. xii. 34. The most effectual knowledge for your salvation, is, to understand these two points; the desperate sinfulness and misery of your own natural condition, and the alone sufficiency of the grace of God in Christ for your salvation; that you may be abased as to the flesh, and exalted in Christ alone. And, for the better understanding these two main points, you should learn how the first Adam was the figure of the second, Rom. v. 14; how sin and death came upon all the natural seed of the first Adam, by His disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit, and how righteousness and everlasting life come upon all the spiritual seed of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, by His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross. You also should learn the true difference between the two covenants, the old and the new, or the law and the Gospel; that the former shuts us up under the guilt and power of sin, and the wrath of God and His curse, by its rigorous terms,—“Do all the commandments, and live; and cursed are ye, if ye do them not, and fail in the least point;” the latter (that is, the new covenant) opens the gates of righteousness and life to all believers by its gracious terms, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and live;” that is, “All your sins shall be forgiven, and holiness and glory shall be given to you freely by His merit and Spirit.” Furthermore, you

should learn the gospel principles that you are to walk by, for the attainment of holiness in Christ. And here I shall remind you particularly, that you would be a good proficient in Christian learning, if you get a good understanding of the sixth and seventh chapters of Paul's epistle to the Romans; where the powerful principles of sanctification are purposely treated of, and distinguished from those weak and ineffectual principles, which we are most naturally prone to walk by. I need not particularly commend any other points of religion to your learning; for, if you get the knowledge of these principal points, which I have mentioned, and improve it to a right end, which is, to live and walk by faith in Christ, your own renewed mind will covet the knowledge of all other things that appertain to life and godliness; and, if in anything you be otherwise minded than is according to saving truth, "God shall reveal even this unto you," Phil. iii. 15. Yet let me caution you, lest, instead of gaining Christ by your knowledge, you rather lose Him, by putting your knowledge in the place of Christ, and trusting on it for your salvation. One cause of the Jews perishing was, that they rested in a form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law, Rom. ii. 20. And, doubtless, all that many Christians will gain by their knowledge, in the end, will only be, to be beaten with more stripes; because they place their religion and salvation chiefly in the knowledge of their Lord's will, and in their ability to talk and dispute about it, without preparing themselves to do according thereto, Luke xii. 47. Much less are you to place your religion, and hope of salvation, in a daily task of reading chapters, or repeating sermons, without understanding more than the Papists do their lessons in the Latin mass, and canonical hours; as sad experience shows, that many seemingly devout and frequent hearers of the word, do notwithstanding remain in lamentable and wonderful ignorance of the saving truth. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaias, "that in hearing, they

shall hear, and not understand ; and, in seeing, they see," &c. Matt. xiii. 14, 15.

2. Another means to be used diligently for the promoting the life of faith, is, examination of our state and ways according to the word ; whether we be, at present, in a state of sin and wrath, or of grace and salvation ; that, if we be in a state of sin, we may know our sickness, and come to the great Physician, while it is called to-day ; and, if we be in a state of grace, we may know that we are of the truth, and assure our hearts before God, with the greater confidence, by the testimony of a good conscience, 1 John iii. 19, 21 ; that so our hearts may be more strongly comforted by faith, and established in every good work ; and that if our ways be evil, we may turn from them to the Lord our God through Christ ; without whom none cometh to the Father, Lam. iii. 40, John xiv. 6. But your great care, in this work of self-examination, must be, to perform it in such a manner, that it may not hinder and destroy the life of faith, as it does in many, instead of promoting it. Therefore beware, lest you trust upon your self-examination, rather than upon Christ ; as some do, who thinks they have made their peace with God, merely because they have examined themselves upon their sick-bed, or before receiving the Lord's Supper, though they have found themselves destitute of holiness, and do not depend on Christ, to make them better, but on their own deceitful purposes and resolutions. Think not, that you must begin this work with doubting whether God will extend mercy to you, and save you ; and that you must leave this a question wholly under debate, until you have found out how to resolve it by self-examination.

This is a common and very pernicious error in the very foundation of this work, which is hereby laid in the great sin of unbelief ; which, as soon as it prevails, does, by its great influence, dash and obscure all inward gracious qualifications of peace, hope, joy, love to God

and His people, before they be at all tried, whether they can give any good evidence for their salvation. And it makes people willing to think their own qualifications better than they are, lest they should fall into an utter despair of their salvation; and thus it wholly mars the good work of self-examination, and makes it destructive to our souls; for to them that are defiled and unbelieving, there is nothing pure, Tit. i. 15. You should rather begin the work with much assurance of faith, that though you may at present find your heart ever so wicked and reprobate, (as many of God's choicest servants have found,) yet the door of mercy is open for you, and that God will certainly save you forever, if you put your trust in His grace through Christ. I have formerly showed, that this confident persuasion is of the nature of saving faith, and that we have sufficient ground for it in the free promises of the Gospel, when we walk in darkness, and can see no light shining forth in our gracious qualifications. If we begin the work with this confidence, it will make us impartial, and not afraid to find out the worst of ourselves, and willing to judge that our hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, beyond what we can find out, Jer. xvii. 9. And, if we have any holy qualifications, this confidence will preserve them in their vigor and brightness, that they may be able to give clear evidence, that we are at present in a state of grace. Mark well the difference between these two questions, whether God will graciously accept and save me, though a vile sinner, through Christ? as before was said; and, whether I am already brought into a state of salvation? The former of these, I say, is to be resolved affirmatively by a confident faith in Christ; the latter only is to be inquired into by self-examination. Misspend not your time, as many do, in poring upon your hearts, to find whether you be good enough to trust on Christ for your salvation, or to find whether you have any faith, before you dare be so bold as to

act faith in Christ. But know, that though you cannot find that you have any faith or holiness, yet, if you will now believe on Him that justifieth the ungodly, it shall be accounted to you for righteousness, Rom. iv. 5. And if you love Christ, and your own soul, misspend not your time in examining, whether you have committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, except it be with a full purpose, to assure yourself, more and more, that you are not guilty thereof; for any doubtfulness in this point, will but harden you in unbelief. Remember well, that the question to be resolved, is, whether you are at present in a state of grace? and, to resolve it, you must be willing to know the best of yourself, as well as the worst; and you must not think, that humility requires you to overlook your good qualifications, and to take notice only of your corruptions. But your great work must be, to find whether there be not some drop of saving grace in the ocean of your corruption. And it will consist well with humility, to take notice of, and own any spark of true holiness that is in you: because the praise and glory of it belongs not to you, but to God, Phil. i. 21. And you must try inherent grace by the touchstone, not by the measure; by its nature, not its degree; not denying any lustings of the spirit in you, because of the strong lustings of the flesh against the spirit; nor denying that you are spiritual in some degree, and babes in Christ, because you find yourselves carnal in a more prevailing degree, and the old man bigger than the new, Gal. v. 17, 1 Cor. ii. 1. Especially, you are to examine and prove, whether you be in the faith? For, if you make sure of this, you make sure of all the things that pertain to life and godliness; and, if you doubt of this, you will certainly doubt of the truth of any other qualifications, and will suspect them to be merely carnal and counterfeit; because it is a known truth, that to the unbelieving there is nothing pure, and that all who have not truly received Christ by faith, are at present in an un-

regenerate state, though they seem ever so pure and godly, 2 Cor. xiii. 5, Tit. i. 5. And let not the issue of this trial depend at all upon your knowledge of the time when, or of the sermon, conference, or place of Scripture, by which you were first converted to the faith; though that is good to know too, if it may be. And some who have formerly lived in gross ignorance, or in a manifest opposition to true faith and holiness, may know such circumstances of their conversion, and may reflect upon them comfortably, as the apostle Paul did, who was turned of a sudden, from his persecuting rage, to be a disciple and apostle of Christ; yet others, sincere believers, may be wholly ignorant of them, as John the Baptist, who was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, Luke i. 5, and they that have been trained up religiously, and know the Holy Scripture from their childhood, as Timothy, 2 Tim. iii. 15; yea, and many that are first turned from gross ignorance and profaneness, to some external reformation, and then in process of time, brought nearer to the kingdom of heaven, by insensible degrees, before they be really new-begotten by the Spirit of faith. There are also some that deceive their souls, by imagining they know, at what time, and by what text of Scripture, they were converted, and can make large discourses of the workings of God upon their hearts, and are prone to talk unseasonably, with vain glorying, of their own experiences; when, at last, all their experiences are not sufficient to evidence, that they ever attained to the least measure of true saving faith.

Therefore, that we may not unjustly condemn or justify our faith, by proceeding on insufficient evidences in its trial, our best way is, to examine it by the inseparable properties of a true saving faith, by putting to ourselves such questions as these: Are we made thoroughly sensible of our sinfulness, and of the deadness and misery of our natural state, so as to despair absolutely of ever attaining to any righteousness, holi-

ness, or true happiness, while we continue in it? Are the eyes of our understanding enlightened, to see the excellency of Christ, and the alone sufficiency and all-sufficiency of His grace for our salvation? Do we prefer the enjoyment of Him above all things, and desire it with our whole heart, as our only happiness, whatever we may suffer for His sake? Do we desire with our whole heart, to be delivered from the power and practice of sin, as well as from the wrath of God, and the pains of hell? Do our hearts come to Christ, and lay hold on Him for salvation, by trusting on Him only, and endeavoring to trust on Him confidently, notwithstanding all fears and doubts that assault us? If you find in yourself a faith that has these properties, though as small as a grain of mustard seed, and opposed with much unbelief and manifold corruptions in your soul, you may conclude, that you are in a state of salvation at present, and that your remaining work is, to continue and grow in it more and more, and to walk worthy of it. You should also examine the fruits of your faith and try whether you can "show your faith by your works," as you are taught, J^AN. ii. 18, that you may be sure not to be deceived in your judgment concerning it. And though it be true, as I have noted, that doubts concerning your faith will produce doubts concerning the sincerity of other qualifications that are fruits thereof; yet possibly you may get such clear evidences of your sincerity, as may overcome and expel all your doubts. And here you are not only to inquire, whether your inclinations, purposes, affections, and actions, be materially good and holy; but also, by what principles they are bred and influenced; whether it be by slavish fears of hell, and mercenary hopes of getting heaven by your works, which are legal and carnal principles that can never produce true holiness; or by gospel principles, as by love to God, because God has loved you first, and to Christ, because He has died; and by the hope of eternal life, as the free gift of God

through Christ, and dependence on God, to sanctify you by His Spirit according to His promises. Remember, that the New Testament is the ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 6; and the Spirit will sanctify us, not by legal, but by gospel principles. Take notice farther, that you need not trouble yourself, to find out a multitude of marks and signs of true grace, if you can find a few good ones. Particularly, you may know that "you are passed from death to life, if you love the brethren," 1 John iii. 14; that is, if you love all whom you can in charity judge to be true believers, and that because they are true believers, and for the truth's sake, that dwelleth in them. As Solomon discerned the true mother of the child, by her affection toward her child; so the mother grace of faith may be discerned by the love that it excites in us toward all true believers. To conclude this point, happy are you if you can find such evidence of the fruits of your faith, as may enable you to express your sincerity in these moderate terms, "Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly," Heb. xiii. 13.

3. Meditation on the word of God is of very great use and advantage for the attainment and practice of holiness through faith in Christ. It is a duty by which the soul, as it were, feeds and ruminates upon the Word as its spiritual food, and digests it, and turns it into nourishment, whereby we are strengthened for every good work. Our souls are satisfied therewith, as with marrow and fatness, when we remember God upon our beds, and meditate on Him in the night watches, Psal. lxiii. 5, 6. The new nature may well be called the mind, Rom. vii. 25, because it lives and acts, by minding and meditating on spiritual things. Therefore it is a duty to be practised, not only at some stated times, but all the day, Ps. cxix. 97, yea, day and night, Ps. i. 2, even in our ordinary employments at home and abroad. An habitual knowledge of the word will not

profit us, without an active consideration of it by frequent meditation. Some think, that much preaching of the word is not needful, where a people are already brought to the knowledge of those things that are necessary to salvation. But they that are regenerated by the word, and by experience, that their spiritual life is maintained and increased by often minding the same word: and therefore, "as new-born babes, they desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby," 1 Pet. ii. 2; and would, by the preachers, be put often in remembrance of the same things, that they may feed upon them by meditation, though they know them already, and are "established in the present truth," 2 Pet. i. 12. But here our greatest skill and chief concern lies, in practising this duty in such a manner, as that it may be subservient, and not at all opposite to the life of faith. We must not rely upon the performance of a daily task of meditation, as a work of righteousness for the procurement of the favor of God, instead of relying on the righteousness of Christ; as indeed we are prone to do, to catch at any straw, rather than to trust only on the free grace of God in Christ for our salvation. And the end of our meditation must not be mere speculation and knowledge of the truth, but rather the vigorous pressing it upon our consciences, and the stirring up our hearts and affections to the practice of it. And, in stirring up ourselves to a holy practice, we must carefully observe, how far the several parts of the truth of God are powerful and effectual for the attainment of this end, that we may make use of them accordingly. We must not imagine, as too many do, yea, and some great masters in the art of meditation, that we can bring our hearts effectually to the love of God and holiness, and can work strange alterations, and frame in our hearts any holy qualifications of virtue, merely by working in ourselves strong apprehensions of God's eternal power and Godhead, His sovereign authority, omniscience,

perfect holiness, exact justice, the equity of His law, and reasonableness of our obedience to it, the unspeakable happiness prepared for the godly, and misery to the wicked, to all eternity. Meditation on such things as these, is indeed very useful to press upon our consciences the strictness of our obligation to holy duties, and to move us to go by faith to Christ, for life and strength to perform them. But, that we may receive this life and strength, whereby we are enabled for immediate performance, we must meditate believingly on Christ's saving benefits, as they are discovered in the Gospel; which is the only doctrine which is the power of God to our salvation, and whereby the quickening Spirit is ministered to us, and that is able to build us up, and give us an inheritance among all them which are sanctified, Rom. i. 16, 2 Cor. iii. 6, Acts xx. 32. You must take special care to act faith in your meditation, and mix the word of God's grace with it, or else it will not profit you, Heb. iv. 2. And, if you set the loving-kindness of God frequently before your eyes, by meditating on it believingly, you will be strengthened to walk in the truth, Ps. xxvi. 3; and, by "beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, you will be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18. This kind of meditation is sweet, and delightful to those who are guided to it by the spirit of faith; and it needs not the help of such artificial methods as the vulgar cannot easily learn. You may let your thoughts run in it at liberty, without confining them to any rules of method. You will find your souls much enlivened by it, and enriched with the grace of God; which cannot be effected by any kind of meditation though it be ever so methodical, and curiously framed according to the rules of art.

4. The sacrament of baptism must needs be of great use to promote the life of faith, if it be made use of according to its nature and institution; because it is a

seal of the righteousness of faith, as circumcision was formerly, Rom. iv. 11. But then we must take heed of making it a seal of the contrary righteousness of works; as the carnal Jews did, who sought to be justified by the law of Moses; and as many Christians do, who transform the new covenant into a covenant of works, requiring sincere obedience to all the laws of Christ, as the condition of our justification; into which new-devised covenant they think themselves to be entered by their baptism. I may say of baptism, thus perverted and abused, as the Apostle says of circumcision, "Baptism verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy baptism is made no baptism," Rom. ii. 25. If thou be baptized, so long as thou continuest in the abuse of that holy ordinance, "Christ shall profit you nothing; Christ is become of none effect to you; ye are fallen from grace," Gal. v. 2, 4. Beware also of making an idol of baptism, and putting it in the place of Christ; as the Papists do, who hold, that it confers grace by the very work that is performed in the administration of it; and as many ignorant people do, who trust rather on their baptism, than on Christ; like the Pharisees, who placed their confidence on circumcision, and other external privileges, Phil. iii. 4, 5. We are to know, that God is not well pleased with many who are baptized, 1 Cor. x. 2, 5; and the time will come, when He will punish the baptized with the unbaptized, as well as the circumcised with the uncircumcised, Jer. ix. 25. Beware also of advancing baptism to an equal partnership with faith in your salvation; as some do, who account all baptism null and void, besides that which is administered to persons grown up to years of discretion; and they that refuse to be rebaptized at those years, are to be accounted aliens from the true church, from Christ and His salvation, notwithstanding all their faith in Christ. If the baptism of infants were null and void, yet the want of true baptism would be no damning

matter to those that are otherwise persuaded. Circumcision was as necessary as baptism in its time ; and yet the Israelites omitted it for the space of forty years in the wilderness, without fearing that any should fall short of salvation for want of it. Josh. v. 6, 7. Many precious saints in the primitive times of persecution, have gone to heaven through a baptism of suffering for the name of Christ, before they had opportunity to be baptized with water. And, in those ancient times, when the custom of deferring baptism too much prevailed, we are not to think that none were in a state of salvation by faith in Christ who deferred that ordinance, or neglected it. Take notice further, that it is not sufficient to avoid the pernicious errors of those that pervert baptism, contrary to its institution ; but you must be also diligent in improving it to the ends for which it was instituted. And here let me desire you to put the question seriously to your souls, What good use do you make of your baptism ? How often or seldom do you think upon it ? The vulgar sort of Christians, yea, it may be feared, many sincere converts, do so little think upon their own baptism, and study to make a due improvement of it, that it is of no more profit to their souls than if they never had been baptized ; yea, their sin is the more aggravated, by rendering such an ordinance of none effect to their souls through their own gross neglect. Though baptism be administered to us but once in our lives, yet we ought frequently to reflect upon it ; and upon all occasions to put the question to ourselves, Unto what were we baptized ? Acts xix. 3. What does this ordinance seal ? what did it engage us to ? And accordingly we must stir up and strengthen ourselves by our baptism, to lay hold on the grace which it seals to us, and to fulfil its engagements. We should often remember, that we are made Christ's disciples by baptism, and engaged to hear Him, rather than Moses, and to believe on Him for our salvation ; as John baptized with the

baptism of repentance, saying to the people, that they should believe on Him that should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. We should remember that our baptism sealed our putting on of Christ, and our being the children of God by faith in Christ, and our being no longer under the former schoolmaster, the law, Gal. iii. 25, 26, 27; and that it sealed to us the putting off the body of sin, and our burial and resurrection with Christ by faith, and the forgiving of our trespasses, Col. ii. 12, 13, our being made members of one body, Christ, and to "drink into one Spirit," 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. We may find by such things as these, which are more fully discovered in the Gospel, that it is the proper nature and tendency of baptism, to guide us to faith in Christ alone for remission of sins, holiness, and all salvation, by union and fellowship with Him; and that a diligent improvement of this ordinance, must needs be of great advantage to the life of faith.

5. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is as a spiritual feast to nourish our faith, and to strengthen us to walk in all holiness, by Christ living and working in us, if it be used according to the pattern which Christ gave us in its first institution, recorded by three Evangelists, Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, 28; Mark xiv. 22, 23, 24; Luke xxii. 19, 20; and was extraordinarily revealed from heaven by Christ himself to the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25; that we be the more obliged and stirred up to the exact observance of it. Its end is, not only that we may remember Christ's death in the history, but in the mystery of it; as that His body was broken for us, that His blood is the blood of the New Testament or covenant shed for us, and for many, for the remission of sins; that so we may receive and enjoy all the promises of the new covenant which are recorded, Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12. Its end is, to remind us, that Christ's body and blood are bread and drink, even all-sufficient food to nourish our souls to everlasting life; and that we ought to take, and eat and drink

Him by faith; and to assure us, that, when we truly believe on Him, He is as really and closely united to us by His Spirit, as the food which we eat and drink is united to our bodies. Christ himself, John vi., more fully explains this mystery. Furthermore, this sacrament not only puts us in mind of the spiritual blessings wherewith we are blessed in Christ, and of our enjoyment of them by faith, but also it is a mean and instrument, whereby God really exhibits and gives forth Christ and His salvation to true believers, and stirs up and strengthens believers, to receive and feed upon Christ by present actings of faith, while they partake of the outward elements. When Christ says, "Eat, drink; this is my body, this is my blood," no less can be meant, than that Christ does as truly give His body and blood to true believers in that ordinance, as the bread and cup; and they do as truly receive it by faith. As if a prince invest a subject in some honorable office, by delivering to him a staff, sword, or signet; and say to him, "Take this staff, sword, or signet; this is such an office or preferment;" or if a father should deliver a deed for conveyance of land to his son, and say, "Take it as thy own; this is such a farm or manor;" how can such expressions import anything less, in common sense and reason, than a present, gift, and conveyance of the offices, preferments, and lands, by and with those outward signs?

Therefore the apostle Paul asserts, that the bread in the Lord's Supper, is the communion of the body of Christ, and the cup is the communion of His blood, 1 Cor. x. 16, which shows, that Christ's body and blood are really communicated to us, and we really partake of them, as well as of the bread and cup. The chief excellence and advantage of this ordinance is, that it is not only a figure and resemblance of our living upon a crucified Saviour, but also a precious instrument, whereby Christ, the bread and drink of life, is really conveyed to us, and received by us through faith. This makes it a

love-token, worthy of that ardent affection toward us which filled Christ's heart at the time when He instituted it, when He was on the point of finishing His greatest work of love, by laying down His life for us, 1 Cor. xi. 23. And this is diligently to be observed, that we may make a right improvement of this ordinance, and receive the saving benefits of it. One reason why many little esteem, and seldom or never partake of this ordinance, and find little benefit by it, is because they falsely imagine, that God in it only holds forth naked signs and resemblances of Christ and His salvation, which they account to be held forth so plainly in Scripture, that they need not the help of such a sign: whereas, if they understood, that God really gives Christ himself to their faith, by and with those signs and resemblances, they would prize it as the most delicious feast, and be desirous to partake of it on all opportunities, Acts ii. 42, and xx. 7. Another reason why many partake seldom or never of this ordinance, and know little of the benefit of it, is, because they think themselves brought by it into great danger of eating and drinking their own damnation; according to these terrifying words of the Apostle, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body," 1 Cor. xi. 9. Therefore they account it the safest way, wholly to abstain from such a dangerous ordinance, or, at least, that once a year is often enough to run so great a hazard. And, if they be brought to it sometimes by constraint of conscience, their slavish fears deprive them of all comfortable fruit of it. So that instead of striving to receive Christ and His salvation therein, they account themselves to have succeeded well if they come off without the sentence of damnation; as the Jewish Rabbis write, that the high priest's life was so eminently hazarded by his entering once a year into the Holy of Holies, that he stayed there as little time as he could, lest the people should think him struck dead by

the hand of God; and, when he was come forth alive, he usually made a feast of thanksgiving for joy of so great a deliverance. But there is no reason why we should be so much terrified by those words of the Apostle; for they were directed against such a gross profanation of the Lord's Supper among the Corinthians, as we may easily avoid, by observing the institution of it, which the Apostle proposes to them as a sufficient remedy against the gross abuse, in not discerning or distinguishing the Lord's body from other bodily food, and partaking of it as their own supper, with such disorder, that one was hungry, and another drunken. Besides, that terrifying word *damnation*, may be rendered more mildly *judgment*, as it is in the margin; yea, the Apostle himself, ver. 22, interprets it of a merciful, temporal judgment, whereby we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. We are indeed prone to sin, in receiving this ordinance unworthily; and so we are also to pollute, more or less, all other holy things that we meddle with. So that the consideration of our danger might fill us with slavish fear in the use of all other means of grace, as well as of this, were it not, that we have a great High Priest, to bear this iniquity of our holy things, Exod. xxviii. 38, under the covert of whose righteousness we are to draw near to God, without slavish fear, in the full assurance of faith, in this as well as in other holy ordinances; and we are to rejoice in the Lord in this spiritual feast, as the Jews were bound to do in their solemn feasts, Deut. xvi. 14, 15. There are other abuses of this ordinance, like to those of baptism before-mentioned, whereby it is rendered opposite, rather than subservient to the life of faith. Some put it in the place of Christ, by trusting on it as a work of righteousness for the procuring of God's favor, or an ordinance sufficient to confer grace to the soul by the very work wrought. Others make it so necessary that they consider faith as not sufficient without it; and

therefore they will partake of it, if they can possibly though it be in a disorderly manner, upon their sick beds, when they are in fear of death, as their *viaticum*. The Papists horribly idolize it by their figment of transubstantiation, and the adoration of their wafer god, and their sacrifice of the mass, for the sins of the quick and the dead. We should remember that the true body and blood of Christ are given to us, with the bread and wine, in a spiritual, mysterious manner, by the unsearchable operation of the Holy Spirit, uniting Christ and us together by faith, without any transubstantiation in the outward elements.

6. Prayer is to be made use of as a means of living by faith in Christ, according to the new man. And it is the making our requests with supplication and thanksgiving. That it is to be used so, as an eminent means, appears, because God requires it, Thess. v. 17, Rom. xii. 12; it is our priestly work, 1 Pet. ii. 5, compared with Ps. cxli. 2; and the property of saints, 1 Cor. i. 2; and God is a God hearing prayer, Ps. lxxv. 2. God will be prayed to by His people, for the benefit that He intends to bestow on them, when once He has enabled them to pray; though at first He is found of them that seek Him not, Ezek. xxxvi. 27, 37, Phil. i. 19, 20, that He may prepare them for thanksgiving, and make benefits double benefits to them, Ps. lxxvi. 16, 18, 19, and l. 15, 2 Cor. i. 10, 11. Though His will be not changed by this means, yet it is accomplished, ordinarily, and His purpose is to accomplish it in this way. And therefore, trusting assuredly should not make us neglect, but rather perform this duty, 2 Sam. vii. 27. Christ the Mediator of the new covenant, by whom justification and sanctification are promised, is also the Mediator for the acceptance of our prayers, Heb. iv. 15, 16. The Spirit who sanctifies us, begets us in Christ, and shows the things of Christ to us, is a Spirit of prayer, Zech. xii. 10, Gal. iv. 6. He is as fire inflaming the soul, and making it mount upward in prayer to God.

Prayerless people are dead to God. If they are children of Zion, yet they are but still-born, dead children, who cry not, Acts ix. 11; not written among the living in Jerusalem; heathens in nature, though Christians in name, Jer. x. 25. It is a duty so great, that it is put for all the service of God, as a fundamental duty, which, if it be done, the rest will be done well and not without it; and other ordinances of worship are helps to it, Isa. lvi. 7. It is the great means whereby faith exerts itself to perform its whole work, and pours itself forth in all holy desires and affections, Ps. lxii. 8, and so yields a sweet savor, as Mary's box of precious spikenard, Mark xiv. 3, John xii. 3; and so the same promises are made to faith and prayer, Rom. x. 11, 12, 13. It is our continual incense and sacrifice, whereby we offer ourselves, our hearts, affections, and lives, to God, Ps. cxli. 2. We act all grace in it; and must act it this way, or else we are not likely to act it any other way. And as we act grace, so we obtain grace by it, and all holiness, Ps. cxxxviii. 3, Luke xi. 13, Heb. iv. 16, Ps. lxxxix. 10. Our riches come in by it. Israel prevails while Moses holds up his hands, Exod. xvii. 11. By prayer Hannah is strengthened against her sorrows, 1 Sam. i. 15, 18; peace is continued, Phil. iv. 6, 7; the disordered soul is set in order by it, as Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 18, Ps. xxxii. 1-5. Incense was still burnt, while the lamps were dressed, Exod. xxx. 7, 8. It is added to the spiritual armor, not as a particular piece of it, but as a means of putting on all, and making use of all aright, that we may stand in the evil day, Eph. vi. 18. It is a means of transfiguring us into the likeness of Christ in holiness, and making our spiritual faces shine, as Christ was transfigured bodily, while He prayed, Luke xi. 29, and Moses' face shone while he talked with God, Exod. xxxiv. 29. Hence the frequent use of this duty is commended to us, Eph. vi. 18. Praying always, (*παντι καιρω*), on all seasons and opportunities; and, by the example of the saints, in public with the

congregation, Acts ii. 42, and x. 30, 31. Solemn acts of prayer should be continued daily, Matt. vi. 11; yea, several times in a day, as morning and evening sacrifice, Dan. vi. 10; Ps. xcii. 2; or thrice, Ps. lv. 17; besides special occasions, Jam. v. 13, 15; and brief ejaculations, that hinder not other business, Ps. cxxix. 8, 2 Sam. xv. 31, Neh. ii. 4. Prayers should be solemn, in our closets, Matt. vi. 6; in families, Acts x. 30, 31. And as sacrifices were multiplied on the Sabbath days, and days of atonement, and at other appointed seasons, Numb. xxviii. besides the continual burnt-offering; so ought prayer also. In a word, a Christian ought to give up himself eminently to this duty, Ps. cix. 4, without limits, Ps. cxix. 164. But the great work is, to practise this duty rightly for holiness, only by faith in Christ. Here we have need to say, Lord teach us to pray, Luke xi. 1; and that not only as to the matter, but as to the manner; both which are taught by Christ, in some measure, in that brief pattern of prayer which He taught His disciples. But, for the understanding of it, we must consult the whole word, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. And we have need of the Spirit of Christ to guide us in the duty; and therefore we are taught to pray by the Spirit, that is, the Holy Ghost, Jude, ver. 20, Eph. ii. 18. The Spirit of God alone guides and enables our souls to pray aright. And, that you may do so, take these rules.

(1.) You must pray with your hearts and spirits, Isa. xxvi. 9, John iv. 24, where the Spirit of Christ, and of prayer, principally resides, Gal. iv. 6, Eph. 1, 17; with understanding, 1 Cor. xiv. 15, 16, for we are renewed in knowledge, Col. iii. 10, 2 Peter i. 3; so that praying in ignorance cannot sanctify. And it must be with sincere, hearty desire of the good things we ask in prayer; for God seeth the heart, Ps. lxii. 8. Prayer is chiefly a heart-work, Ps. xxvii. 8. God hears the heart without the mouth, but never hears the mouth acceptably without the heart, 1 Sam. i. 23. Your

prayer is odious hypocrisy, mocking of God, and taking His name in vain, when you utter petitions for the coming of His kingdom, and the doing of His will, and yet hate godliness in your heart. This is lying to God, and flattering with your lips, but no true prayer; and so God takes it, Ps. lxxviii. 36. And you must have a sense of your wants and necessities, and that God only can supply them, 2 Chron. xx. 12. And fervency in these desires is required, Jam. v. 16. And you must pray with attention, minding yourselves what you pray, or else you cannot expect that God should mind it, Dan. ix. 3. Watch unto it, 1 Peter iv. 7. Set yourselves to this duty intently. God sees where your heart is wandering, when you pray without attention, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. When you say ever so many prayers without understanding, attention, affection, it is not praying at all, but sinning, and playing the hypocrite; as Papists mumble over their Latin prayer upon the beads by tale, prating like parrots what they cannot understand. And thus ignorant people say over their forms of English prayers, and account that they have well discharged their duty, though their heart prayed not at all, and was minding other things. This is a mere lip-labor, and bodily exercise offering a dead carcass to God; plain deceit, Mal. i. 13, 14; a form of godliness, but denying the power, 2 Tim. iii. 5; whereby Popery has cheated the world of the power of this, and all other holy ordinances. They say, God minds and knows what they speak, and approves it. I answer, He sees them so as to judge them for hypocrites, and profane persons, for not knowing, minding, and approving what they utter themselves; He has no pleasure in fools, Eccles. v. 1, 4. They would not deal so with an earthly prince.

(2.) You must pray "in the name of Christ:" for the Spirit glorifies Christ, John xvi. 14, and leadeth us to God through Christ, Eph. ii. 18. As I have showed, that walking in the Spirit, and walking in Christ, is

all one ; so is praying in the Spirit, and praying by and through Christ. And as we are to walk in the name of the Lord, and to do all things in His name, so are we to pray in His name, as is commanded, John xiv. 13, 14. It is not enough to conclude our prayers "through Jesus Christ our Lord ;" but we must come for blessings in the garments of our elder brother, and must depend upon His worthiness and strength for all. So also we must praise God for all things in His name, as things received for His sake, and by Him, Eph. v. 20. We must lay hold on His strength only, and plead nothing, and own nothing, for our acceptance, but Him. We must not arrogantly plead our own works, like the proud Pharisee, Luke xvii. 11, 12 ; except only as fruits of grace, and rewards of grace, Isa. xxxviii. 3. Praying in the Spirit is upon gospel, not legal principles, Rom. vii. 6, 2 Cor. vi. 3, with great humiliation, and sense of unworthiness, Ps. li. ; with a broken spirit ; with despair of acceptance, otherwise than upon Christ's account, Dan. ix. 18. If your enlargements, strugglings, meltings, have been ever so great ; yet without this all is abominable.

(3.) Hence you must not think to be accepted for the goodness of your prayers, nor trust on them as works of righteousness ; which is making idols of your prayers, and putting them into the place of Christ ; quite contrary to praying in the name of Christ. Thus Papists hope to be saved by saying their tale of prayers upon their bead-rows : and they have indulgences granted upon their saying so many prayers, and of such a sort. Yea, some ignorant Protestants trust on their prayers as duties of righteousness ; and they think one prayer more acceptable than another, by reason of the holiness of the form, if it were made by holy men ; especially the Lord's prayer, which they use to help them in any exigence or danger ; how little soever they can apply it to their own case, they make an idol of it. And some use it and other places

of Scripture, as a spell or charm, to drive away the devil. And others think their prayers more acceptable in one place than another, by reason of the holiness of the place, John iv. 21, 24, 1 Tim. ii. 8. Others trust on their much speaking, Matt. vi. 7, which they call the enlarging of their hearts. They think to put off God, and to stop the mouth of conscience, with a few prayers, and so to live as they please.

(4.) Pray to God, as your Father, through Christ as your Saviour, in faith of remission of sins and of your acceptance with God, and the obtaining all other things which you desire of Him, as far as is necessary for your salvation, Jam. i. 5, 6, 7, and v. 15; 1 John v. 14, 15; Mark xi. 24; Heb. x. 14; Psal. lxii. 8, lxxxvi. 7, lv. 16, lvii. 1, 2, and xvii. 6. This is praying in Christ, Eph. iii. 12, and by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of adoption, Rom. viii. 15, Gal. iv. 6. Without this, prayer is lifeless and heartless, and but a dead carcass, Rom. x. 14, Psal. lxxvii. 1, 2. By this you may judge whether you have prayed rightly, more than by your melting affection or largeness in expression. Though you be not assured that you shall have everything that you ask, yet everything that is good. This faith you must endeavor to act; and therefore, if any sin lie on your conscience, you must strive first to get the pardon of it, Psal. xxxii. 1, 5, and li. 14, 15, and purification from it by faith, that you may lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting, 1 Tim. ii. 8. The sin of wrath is there especially mentioned, because it is contrary to love and to forgiving others. Here lies the strength, life, and power of prayer. Set faith at work, and you will be powerful, and prevail.

(5.) You must strive in prayer to stir up and act every other sanctifying grace, through faith moving you thereto. Thus your spikenards will yield their smell, as godly sorrow; Psal. xxxviii. 18, peace; Isa. xxvii. 5; joy, Psal. cv. 3; hope, Psal. lxxi. 5; desire and love to God, Psal. iv. 6; and love to all His commands,

Psal. cxix. 4, 5, and to all His people out of love to Him, Psal. cxxii. 8. You must seek the Spirit himself, in the first place, Luke xi. 14, Psal. xxxvii. 5 ; and all spiritual things, Matt. vi. 33. Praying only for carnal things, shows a carnal heart, and leaves it carnal. Pray for faith, Mark ix. 24, and for such things as may serve most for the glorifying God, 2 Chron. i. 11, 12 ; and for outward things, you must act faith in submission to His will. And this prayer sets you in a holy frame, Matt. xxvi. 52, Luke xxii. 42, 43. Hallowing God's name must be your aim, Matt. vi. 9, not your lusts, Jam. iv. 3.

(6.) Strive to bring your soul into order by this duty, however disordered by guilt, anguish, inordinate cares, or fears, Psal. xxxii. 1, 5, lv. 16, 17, 20, 21, and lxix. 32 ; Phil. iv. 6, 7, 1 Sam. i. A watch must be often wound up. You must wrestle in prayer, against your unbelief, doubts, fears, cares, reluctance of the flesh, to that which is good ; against all evil lusts and desires, coldness of affection, impatience, trouble of spirit, everything that is contrary to a holy life, and the graces and holy desires to be acted for yourselves or others, Col. iv. 12, Rom. xv. 30. Stir up yourselves to the duty, Col. ii. 1, 2 ; Isa. lxiv. 7. Though the flesh be cross and reluctant, we must not yield, but resist by the Spirit, Matt. xxiv. 14 ; and thus we shall find the Spirit helping our infirmities, Rom. vii. 26, 27. Though God seem to defer long, we must not faint or be discouraged, Luke xviii. 1. 7. The greater our agonies be, the more earnestly we are to pray, Psal. xxii. 1, 2 ; Luke xxii. 42. This is (προσκαρτερεῖν τῇ προσευχῇ,) "to continue instant in prayer," Rom. xii. 12, Eph. vi. 18. Thus you will find prayer a great heart-work, and not such a thing as may be done while you think on other things ; and that it requires all the strength of faith and affection that you can possibly stir up. Thus you may get a holy frame.

(7.) You must make a good use of the whole matter, and all the manner of prayer, as ordinary and ex-

traordinary exigencies may require, to stir up grace in you, by wrestling, and to bring your hearts into a holy frame. As, in confession, you must condemn yourself according to the flesh, but not as you are in Christ. You must not deny the grace that you have, as if you were only wicked hitherto, and are now to begin again; which hinders praise for grace received in those that are already converted. In supplication, you must endeavor to work up your heart to a godly sorrow, Psal. xxxviii. 18, and a holy sense of your own sin and misery; and lay before you the aggravations thereof, Psal. li. 3, and cii. Complaint and lamentation are one great part of prayer, as the Lamentations of Jeremiah. And you must add pleadings to your petitions, with such arguments as may serve to strengthen faith, and to stir up and kindle affection, Job xxiii. 4; which pleadings are taken from attributes, Num. xiv. 17, 18; promises, 2 Sam. vii. 27, 28, &c.; Gen. xxxii. 9, 12; the equity of our cause, Psal. xvii. 2, 3; the advantage and benefit of the thing, to the glory of God, and our comfort, Psal. cxv. 1, 2, and lxxix. 9, 10, 13. Naked petitions are not sufficient, when the soul finds special cause of struggling and wrestling against corruptions and dangers, and for mercies, Christ's large prayer (John xvii.) is made up of pleading and very few petitions. And we must make use also of praise and thanksgiving, to stir up peace, joy, love, &c. Gen. xxxiii. 10, Psal. xviii. 1, 2, 3, xxxiii. 1, lxxiv. 14, and civ. 34. Especially be much in praising God for mercies of the new state in Christ, Eph. i. 3; and then you will the better give thanks for all benefits on this account, Eph. v. 20, 1 Thess. v. 18; and plead those benefits, to stir up to faith and duty. That brief ejaculation, "Lord have mercy on me," is very good to be used: but it will not answer the end and use of the whole duty of prayer; as some lazy carnal people would have it, and so harden themselves in the neglect of the duty; though the large improvement and use of

all the matter of prayer, at all times, is not required, but only as ordinary and extraordinary occasions may require.

(8.) You must not confine and limit your prayers by any prescribed form; seeing it is impossible that any such forms should be contrived, as should answer and fit all the various conditions and necessities of the soul at all times. I do not condemn all forms, as that made by Christ, the Lord's prayer; though it were easy to show, that Christ never intended it for a form of prayer, so as to bind any to the precise form of words; and it is plain the Spirit of God has expressed it in different words, Matt. vi., Luke xi. But better to pray by that form or other forms, than not at all. It is uncharitable to take away crutches, or wooden legs, from lame people; yet none will look upon them but as dead helps. I say, it is utterly unlawful to bind ourselves to any form; because none can answer the duty fitly and suitably to particular occasions, Eph. vi. 18, Phil. iv. 6, John xv. 7, 1 Thess. v. 18, Eph. v. 20. You must make the whole Scripture your common prayer-book as the primitive church did; being the language of the Spirit, reaching all occasions and conditions, and fittest to speak to God in. And, if you use a form, you must follow it by the Spirit farther than the form goes, according as He shall guide you by the word; or else you quench the Spirit, 1 Thess. v. 19. If you know the principles of prayer, and have a lively sense of your necessities, and hearty desires for God's grace and mercies, you will be able to pray without forms, and your affections will bring forth words out of the fulness of your heart. And you need not be over-solicitous and timorous about words; for doubtless, the Spirit, who is the help to us in speaking to men, will also much more help us to speak to God, if we desire it, 1 Cor. i. 5, Mark xiii. 11, Luke xii. 11, 12. And God regards not eloquent words, nor artificial composition; neither need we regard it in private prayer, Isa. xxxviii.

14. If you limit yourself to forms, you will thereby grow formal, and limit the Spirit.

7. Another means appointed of God, is, singing of psalms, that is, songs of any sacred subject, composed to a tune; hymns or songs of praise, and spiritual songs, of any sublime spiritual matter, as Ps. xlv. and the Song of Solomon. God has commanded it in the New Testament, Col. iii. 16, Eph. v. 19; though, now in these days, many question whether it be an ordinance. And there were many commands for it under the Old Testament, Ps. cxlix. 1, 2, 3, xevi. 1, and c. Moses and the children of Israel sang before David's time, Exod. xv. David composed psalms by the Spirit, to be sung publicly, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2, yea, privately too, Ps. xl. 3, 2 Chron. xxix. 30, Ps. cv. 2. Other songs also were made upon several occasions, and used, whether they were parts of the Scripture or not; as Solomon made a thousand and five, 1 Kings iv. 32. And they made songs upon occasion, which teach, that it is lawful for us to do so, if they be according to the word, Isa. xxxviii. 9, 14. The matter of Scripture may be sung, Ps. cxix. 54. Christ and His disciples sung a hymn, Matt. xxvi. 30, supposed to be one of David's psalms: and they were written for our instruction, as well as other parts of Scripture, Rom. xv. 4, &c., and so to be used now in singing. They speak of the things of the New Testament, either figuratively or clearly; and we may understand them better now, than the Jews could, under the Old Testament, 2 Cor. iii. 16, Gal. ii. 17. Christians heretofore practised this duty as well as Jews, Acts xvi. 25. Hence their *antelucani hymni* (the hymns they sung before daylight) were noted by Pliny, a heathen. These songs or hymns may be used at all times, especially for holy mirth or rejoicing, Jam. v. 13. But this text is not to be taken exclusively in singing, any more than in prayer, Ps. xxxviii. 18, 2 Chron. xxxv. 25.

But the right manner of this duty is chiefly to be

noted. And, here, (1.) Trust not upon the melody of the voice; as if that pleased God, who delights only in the melody of the heart, Col. iii. 16. Neither let the recreation of your senses be your end, which is but a carnal work: *Non musica chordula, sed cor; non clamans, sed amans, psallit in aure Dei*; "Not a musical string, but the heart; not crying, but loving, sounds in the ear of the Lord." This spiritual music was typified by musical instruments of old. (2.) You must use it for the same end as meditation and prayer, according to the nature of what is sung, that is, to quicken faith, 2 Chron. xx. 21, 22, Acts xvi. 25, 26; and joy and delight in the Lord, glorifying in Him, Ps. civ. 33, 34, cv. 3, cxlix. 1, 2, and xxxiii. 1, 2, 3. You are never right until you can be heartily merry in the Lord, to act joy and mirth holily, James v. 13, Eph. v. 19; and also to get more knowledge, and instruction in heavenly mysteries, and in your duty, teaching and admonishing, Col. iii. 16. Many psalms are Maschils, (as their title is,) that is psalms of instruction. Thus we are to sing such psalms as speak in the first person, though we cannot apply them to ourselves as words uttered by ourselves concerning ourselves; and in this we do not lie. David speaks of Christ as of himself, as a pattern of affliction and virtue, to instruct others; and we sing such psalms, not as our words, but words for our instruction. And therein we do not lie, any more than the Levites, the sons of Korah, or Jeduthun, or other musicians bound to sing them, Ps. v. xxxix. and xlii. Though it be good to personate all the good that we can; yet we have so much liberty in the use of psalms, that though we cannot apply all to ourselves, as speaking and thinking the same, yet we shall answer the end, if we sing for our instruction, as in Ps. vi. xxvi. xlv. ci. and cxxxi. And psalms have a peculiar fitness for teaching and instructing; because the pleasantness of metre said or sung, is very helpful to the memory. See Deut. xxxi. 19, 21. And there is a variety of

curious artifice in the placing of words in the psalms upon this account; and there are some alphabetical psalms, as Ps. xxv. xxxiv. xxxvii. cxi. cxii. cxix. and cxlv. And, by the melody of the sound, the instruction comes in with delight, as a physical dose sugared; and sorrow is naturally allayed, to fit the mind for spiritual joy; and distempered passions appeased, 2 Kings iii. 15, 1 Sam. xvi. 14, 15, 16. So, Orpheus, Amphion, and others, were famous for civilizing rude and barbarous people by music.

8. Fasting is also an ordinance of God to be used for the same purpose and end, and is commended to us under the New Testament, Matt. ix. 15, and xvii. 21, 1 Cor. vii. 5. And we have examples of it, Acts xiii. 2, 3, and xiv. 23. Under the Old Testament, there were frequent commands for it, and examples, chiefly upon occasion of extraordinary afflictions, 1 Sam. vii. 6, Neh. ix. 1, Dan. ix. 3, and x. 2, 3, 2 Sam. xii. 16, Ps. xxxv. 13, 2 Sam. iii. 31, Joel ii. 13; beside the anniversary great day of atonement, Lev. xvi. 29, 31, when every one was to fast on pain of cutting off. There is a prophecy of the same for the times of the New Testament, Zech. xii. 12. It was used most on extraordinary occasions; and it is a help to holiness by faith, because it is a meet help for extraordinary prayer and humiliation, Joel i. 14, and ii. 12. But the great matter is, to use it rightly, as follows:—

(1.) Trust not in it, as meriting or satisfying, as Papists and Pharisees do, Luke xvii. 11, putting it in the place of Christ; or as a means of itself conferring grace, and mortifying lusts, as many do, who may sooner kill their bodies than their lusts; or as any purifying rite; yea, or in or for itself acceptable to God, 1 Tim. vi. 8, Heb. xii. 9, Col. ii. 16, 17, 20, 23. Imagine not, that prayer is not acceptable without it; for this is against faith. Fasts, as well as feasts, are no substantial parts of worship, because not spiritual, but bodily; though, under the Old Testament, they were

parts, as instituted rites, figurative and teaching. But that use is now ceased ; as that on the day of atonement ; and so many significative rites adjoined to fasting, as sackcloth, ashes, rending garments, pouring out water, lying on the earth. The kingdom of God consists not in these things, Rom. xiv. 17. The soul is hardened by trusting in them, Isa. lviii. 3, 6, Zech. vii. 5, 6, 10.

(2.) Use it as a help to extraordinary prayer and humiliation ; that the mind may not be unsuited for it, by eating, drinking, or bodily pleasures, Joel ii. 13, Isa. xxii. 12, 13, Zech. xii. 10-14. It is good only as a help to the soul, removing impediments. The best fast is, when the mind is taken off from delights, as in John the Baptist's case, Matt. iii. 4 ; when heaven and godly sorrow takes off the soul, Zech. xii. 10-14.

(3.) Use it in such a measure as may be proper for its end ; without which it is worth nothing. If abstinence divert your mind, by reason of a gnawing appetite, then you had better eat sparingly, as Daniel, in his great fast, chapter x. 2, 3. Some have not enough of spiritual-mindedness, to give up themselves to fasting and prayer, without great distraction ; and such had better eat, than go beyond their strength in a thing not absolutely necessary, which produces only a slavish act, as in the case of virginity, 1 Cor. vii. 7, 8, 9, 34, 35, 36. Christ would not have His weak disciples necessitated to the duty, Matt. ix. 14, 15. In the mean time, such should strive to be sensible of the weakness and carnality that hinders their use of this excellent help.

9. You may expect here something to be said of vows. But I shall only say this of them : Think not to bring yourselves to good by vows and promises, as if the strength of your own law could do it, when the strength of God's law does it not. We bring children to make promises of amendment ; but we know how well they keep them. The devil will urge you to vow,

and then to break, that he may perplex your conscience the more.

10. Another great means, is, fellowship and communion with the saints, Acts ii. 42.

FIRST, This means must be used diligently. Whoever God saves, should be added to some visible church, and come into the communion of other saints; and, if they have no opportunity for it, their heart should be bent towards it. Sometimes the church is in the wilderness, and hindered from visible communion and ordinances; but they who believe in Christ, are always willing and desirous so to add and join themselves, Acts ii. 41, 44, 47. "And they continued steadfastly in fellowship," 1 John ii. 19. And God binds His people to leave the fellowship and society of the wicked as much as may be, 2 Cor. vi. 17. And, so far as we are necessitated to keep company with them, we ought to show charity to their souls and bodies, 1 Cor. v. 9. This communion with saints is to be exercised in private converse, Ps. ci. 4, 5, 6, 7, and in public assemblies, Heb. x. 25, Zech. xiv. 16, 17. And doubtless it ought to be used for the attainment of holiness; as may be proved.

First, In general, because God communicates all salvation to a people ordinarily, by or in a church; either by taking them into fellowship, or holding forth the light of truth by His churches to the world. A church is the temple of God, where God dwells, 1 Tim. iii. 15. He has placed His name and salvation there, as in Jerusalem of old, Joel ii. 32, 2 Chron. vi. 5, 6. He has given to His churches those officers and ordinances whereby He converts others, 1 Cor. xii. 28. His springs are there, Ps. lxxxvii. 7. He makes the several members of a church, instruments for the conveyance of His grace and fulness from one to another, as the members of a natural body convey to each other the fulness of the head, Eph. iv. 16. All the new-born are brought forth and nourished by the church, Isa.

lxvi. 8, 11, xlix. 20, and lx. 4; and therefore all who would be saved should join to a church; they shall prosper that love the church, so as to stand in its gates, and unite as members, brethren, and companions, Ps. cxxii. 2, 4, 6. And wrath is denounced against those who are not members of it, at least, of the mystical body: they cannot have God for their Father, who have not the church for their mother, Song i. 7, 8. This makes those who desire fellowship with God, to take hold of the skirts of His people, Zech. viii. 23.

Secondly, In particular, fellowship with the saints conduces to holiness in many ways.

1. By manifold helps to holiness, which are received thereby: As,

(1.) The word and sacraments, Acts ii. 42, Isa. ii. 3, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; and all the ministerial office and labor in watching over souls, Heb. xiii. 17, 1 Thess. v. 12, 13, Isa. xxv. 6. None of these helps can be enjoyed without fellowship of saints with each other. And, were believers obliged to stand singly by themselves, and not maintain fellowship with each other, for mutual assistance and common good, none of these things could have continued; neither could any believer have been extant at this day, in an ordinary way, but even the very name of believers had been abolished.

(2.) Mutual prayer, which is the more forcible, when all pray together, Matt. xviii. 19, 20, 2 Cor. i. 10, 11, James v. 16, Rom. xv. 30.

(3.) Mutual admonition, instruction, consolation, to help each other when they are ready to fall, and to promote the good work in each other, 1 Thess. v. 14. "He that walketh with wise men, shall be wise," Prov. xiii. 20. "Woe to him that is alone when he falleth." See Eccl. iv. 9-12. In church-fellowship there are many helpers, many to watch. Soldiers have their security in being in company; and the church is compared to an army with banners, Song vi. 4, 10. So, for

quickenings affections, iron sharpeneth iron, Prov. xxii. 17. Likewise, the counsel of a friend, like ointment and perfume, rejoiceth the heart, Prov. xxvii. 9. Yea, the wounds and reproofs of the righteous are as precious balm, Ps. cxli. 5.

(4.) External supports, which mitigate afflictions, and are to be communicated mutually, Eph. iv. 28, 1 Peter iv. 9, 10. The affliction is increased, when none careth for our souls, Ps. cxlii. 4.

(5.) Excommunication, when offences are exceeding heinous, or men continue obstinate in sin. This ordinance is appointed for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved, 1 Cor. v. 5. Better and more hopeful it is, to be cast out by the church for a person's amendment, than to be wholly without the church at all times: and better to be a lost sheep, than a goat or swine. For excommunication cuts off actual communion only, until repentance be evident; and does not absolutely abolish the title and relation of a brother and church-member, though it judges one to be an unnatural brother, and a pernicious member at present, not fit for acts of communion. Besides, admonition is still to be afforded, 2 Thess. iii. 15, and any means are to be used, that may serve to cure and restore him. The church reaches forth a hand to help such a person, though it do not join hands in fellowship with him; or it communicates to him, not with him. Yet if he have not so much grace as to repent, it were better he had never known the way of righteousness, 2 Peter ii. 21.

(6.) The lively examples of saints are before our eyes in church-fellowship, to teach and encourage, Phil. iii. 17, and iv. 9, 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11, 2 Cor. ix. 2.

Thirdly, By those holy duties that are required, and which appertain to this fellowship and communion. All acts that belong to this fellowship, are holy; as, hearing, receiving the sacrament, prayer, mutual admonitions, &c. I shall consider some such holy acts,

whereby we are rather doers than receivers, and which we perform towards others: As,

(1.) Godly discourse, teaching, admonishing, comforting others in Christ; which we cannot so perform in others, as towards those with whom we have strict fellowship in Christ. Others, like swine, trample those jewels under foot; and saints therefore are forced to refrain from godly discourse in their company, Amos v. 10, 13, and vi. 10. But holy discourse is most acceptable to the saints, and to be practised with them, Mal. iii. 16, and is greatly to the advantage of holiness, Prov. xi. 25.

(2.) In helping, succoring, and conversing with Christ in His members, we do good to Christ in His members in church-fellowship; and we ourselves, as members of Christ, act as well from Christ as towards Christ whereas, if we do good to others without, we do good only for Christ's sake, but not to Christ, Matt. xxv. 35-49, Ps. xvi. 2, 3. We have advantage in general, to do all duties that belong to us as members of Christ to fellow-members; which we cannot do, if separate from them; as a natural member cannot perform its office to other members, if separate from them.

SECONDLY, The means must be used rightly, for attaining holiness only in Christ.

1. One rule is, Do not trust on church membership, or on churches, as if this or that relation in fellowship commended you to God of itself; whereas, church communion is but a help to fellowship with Christ, and walking in the duties of that fellowship. The Israelites stumbled on Christ, by trusting on their carnal privileges, and set them in opposition to Christ; whereas, they should have only made them subservient to Christ. Confidence in them should have been abandoned, as Paul's example teaches, Phil. iii. 3, 4, 5, &c. We must not glory in Paul, Apollos, Cephas, but in Christ; else we glory in the flesh, and in men, 1 Cor. i. 12, 13, and iii. 21. Trusting on church privileges is an inlet to

formality and licentiousness, Jer. vii. 4, 8, 9, 10, and thence the corruption of churches, Isa. i. 10, 2 Tim. ii. 20.

2. Follow no church any farther than you may follow it in the way of Christ; and keep fellowship with it only on account of Christ, because it follows Christ, and has fellowship with Christ, 1 John i. 3, Zech. viii. 23. If a church revolt from Christ, we must not follow it, how ancient soever it may be; as the Israelitish church was not to be followed, when it persecuted Christ and His apostles; and many, by adhering to that church, fell from Christ, Phil. iii. 6, Acts vi. 13, 14, and xxi. 28. We are indeed to hear the church, but not every one that calls itself so, and none any farther than it speaks as a true church, according to the voice of the Shepherd, John x. 27. We must subject ourselves to ministers of Christ, and stewards of His mysteries, 1 Cor. iv. 1, but must give up ourselves first to Christ absolutely, and to the church according to the will of Christ, 2 Cor. viii. 5. Our fear must not be taught by the precepts of men, Matt. xv. The doctrines of any body of men are to be tried by Scripture, whatever authority they pretend to, Acts xvii. 11. An unlimited following of church guides, brought the church into Babylon, and into all manner of spiritual whoredoms and abominations. You are not baptized into the name of the church, but into the name of Christ, 1 Cor. i. 13.

3. Do not think, that you must attain this or that degree of grace, before you join yourself in full communion with a church of Christ in all ordinances. But when you have given up yourself to Christ, and learned the duty of communion, give up yourself unto a church of Christ, though you find much weakness and inability. For church ordinances of special communion serve to strengthen you; and how can you get heat, being alone? The disciples, as soon as converted, embraced all fellowship, Acts ii. 42. And churches, that they may forward holiness in themselves and others, must

be willing to receive Christ's weak ones, and to feed His lambs as well as better-grown sheep, and bear them on their sides, Isa. lxvi. 12. How else shall Christ's weak ones grow strong by that nourishment that other parts supply? They are very unreasonable, who expect Christians should grow, out of church-fellowship, to as high a degree of grace, as those that are in those pastures of tender grass; and are unwilling to receive any that they are likely to have occasion to bear with: whereas, bearing and long-suffering are great duties of church-fellowship, Eph. iv. 2, 3, Rom. xiv. 1. The weakest have the most need to be strengthened by church communion; and we are bound to receive them, as Christ has received us, Rom. xv. 7. We do not reject or separate the weaker parts of the body, 1 Cor. xii. 23, 24, but put more honor and comeliness on them. Admission into the churches in the apostolic times was gained upon profession, with a show of seriousness; though tares got in among the wheat, and many scandals arose to the reproach of the ways of Christ; and the greatest strictness will not keep out all hypocrites; yet the best care must be taken so far as not to hinder any that have the least truth of grace.

4. Keep communion with a church, for the sake of communion with Christ, 1 John i. 3, Zech. viii. 23. Therefore you must keep communion in Christ's pure ways only, and, in them, seek Christ by faith; that, in the enjoyment of those advantages, you may receive and act the godliness and holiness before mentioned, and aim at spiritual nourishing and growth in grace. Choose therefore fellowship with the most spiritual churches. Judge of churches and men, according to the rule of the new creature, 2 Cor. v. 16, 17, and try them, Rev. ii. 2, and iii. 9; otherwise a church may corrupt you. See that thy communion answer its end, tend to thy edification, not to destruction; which you ought to take all the advantages of, not only in the church where you are a member, but by communion

with other churches, as occasionally Providence casts you among them; for your communion with a particular church obliges to communion with all churches of Christ in His ways, as you are called thereto, 1 Cor. x. 27. And it is an abuse to say, We are members of a church in London, and therefore refuse fellowship with a church in the country; seeing, if we are members of Christ, we are members of one another, whether single persons or churches. And endeavor to join in fellowship with the godly of the place where you live, that you may have the more frequent and constant communion. Onesimus, though converted at Rome, must be one of the church of the Colossians, because he lived there, Col. iv. 9, compared with Philemon, verse 10. The union of the saints together in distinct societies, according to the places where they lived, was the apostolic practice, and cannot be violated without sin. Such can best watch over one another, admonish, comfort, and edify each other; which is the benefit of communion. And they indeed destroy communion, who seek a communion where they cannot have this benefit. I only add to this head, that church-fellowship, without practising the ways of Christ, is but a conspiracy to take His name in vain, and a counterfeit church-fellowship of hypocrites. It is impudence for such to invite others to their communion; tyranny, to compel them. Every Christian is bound to seek a better church-fellowship by reformation; and those who do so, are the best sons of Christ's church, who inquire, Is this the way to enjoy Christ? church communion being appointed to enjoy Christ therein.

5. Especially leave not the church in persecution, when you need its help most, and are then most tried whether you will cleave to it. This is a sign of apostasy, Heb. x. 25, 26, Matt. xxiv. 9, 10, 12, 13, 14. We should cleave to one another as one flesh, even to prisons and death; or else we deny Christ in His members, Matt. xxv. 13.

DIRECTION XIV.

That you may seek holiness and righteousness, only by believing in Christ, and walking in Him by faith, according to the former directions, take encouragement from the great advantages of this way, and the excellent properties of it.

EXPLICATION.

THIS direction may serve as an epilogue or conclusion, by stirring us up to a lively and cheerful embracing those gospel rules before mentioned, by several weighty motives. Many are kept from seeking godliness, because they know not the way to it; or the way that they think of, seems uncouth, unpleasant, disadvantageous, and full of discouragement; like the way through the wilderness to Canaan, which wearied the Israelites, and occasioned their many murmurings, Num. xxi. 4.

But this is a way so good and excellent, that those who have the true knowledge of it, and desire heartily to be godly, cannot dislike it. I shall show the excellency of it, in several particulars. But you should first call to mind what is the way I have taught, viz. union and fellowship with Christ, and by faith in Christ, as discovered in the Gospel; not by the law, or in a natural condition, or by thinking to get it before we come to Christ, to procure Christ by it, which is striving against the stream; but that we must first apply Christ and His salvation to ourselves, for our comfort, and that by confident faith; and then walk by that faith, according to the new man, in Christ, and not as in a natural condition; and use all means of holiness rightly for this end. Now, that this is an excellent, advantageous way appears by the following desirable properties of it.

First, It has this property, that it tends to the abasement of all flesh, and the exaltation of God only in His grace and power through Christ. And so it is agreeable to God's design in all His works, and the end that He aims at, Rom. xi. 6, Isa. ii. 17, Ezek. xxxvi. 21, 22, 23, 31, 32, Ps. cxlv. 4; and a fit means for attaining the end that we ought to aim at in the first place, which is the hallowing, sanctifying, and glorifying God's name in all things; and is the first and chief petition, Matt. vi. 9; and is the end of all our acting, 1 Cor. x. 31, and was the end of giving the law, Rom. iii. 19, 20. God made all things for Christ, and would have Him have the pre-eminence in all, Col. i. 17, 18, that the Father may be glorified in the Son, John xiv. 13. And this property of it is a great argument to prove, that it is the way of God, and has the character of His image stamped upon it. We may say, that it is like Him, and a way according to His heart; as Christ proves His doctrine to be of God, by this argument, John vii. 18. And Paul proves the doctrine of justification, and of sanctification, and salvation by grace through faith, to be of God; because it excludes all boastings of the creature, Rom. iii. 27, 28, 1 Cor. i. 29, 30, 31, Eph. iii. 8, 9. This property appears evidently in the mystery of sanctification by Christ in us through faith. For,

1. It shows, that we can do nothing by our natural will or any power of the flesh; and that God will not enable us to do anything that way, Rom. vii. 18, however nature be stirred up by the law, or natural helps, Gal. iii. 21. And so it serves to work self-loathing and abasement, and to make us look upon nature as desperately wicked, and past cure, and not to be reformed, but put off, by putting on Christ. It remains wicked, and only wicked, after we have put on Christ.

2. It shows that all our good works, and living to God, are not by our own power and strength at all, but by the power of Christ, living in us by faith; and that

God enables us to act, not merely according to our natural power, as He enables carnal men and all other creatures, but above our own power, by Christ united to us and in us, through the Spirit. All men live, move, and have their being in Him; and, by His universal support and maintenance of nature in its being and activity, they act, Heb. i. 3, so that the glory of their actings as creatures belongs to God. But God acts more immediately in His people; who are one flesh and one Spirit with Christ; and who act not by their own power, but by the power of the Spirit of Christ in them, as closely united to them, and being the living temples of His Spirit; so that Christ is the immediate principal agent of all their good works, and they are Christ's works properly, who works all our works in us and for us: and yet they are the works of believers by fellowship with Christ, by whose light and power the faculties of the saints act, and are acted, Gal. ii. 20, Eph. iii. 16, 17, Col. i. 1; so that we are to ascribe all our works to God in Christ, and thank Him for them as free gifts, 1 Cor. xv. 10, Phil. i. 11. God enables us to act, not by ourselves, as He does others, but by Himself. The wicked are supported in acting only according to their own nature; so they act wickedly: thus all are said to live, move, and have their being in God, Acts xvii. 27. But God enables us to conquer sin, not by ourselves, but by Himself, Hos. i. 7; and the glory of enabling us not only belongs to Him, which the Pharisee could not but ascribe to Him, Luke xviii. 11, but also the glory of doing all in us. And yet we work as one with Christ, even as He works as one with the Father, by the Father working in Him. We live as branches by the juice of the vine, act as members by the animal spirits of the head, and bring forth fruit by marriage to Him as our husband, and work in the strength of Him as the living bread that we feed on. He is all in the new man, Col. iii. 11, and all the promises are made good in Him, 2 Cor. i. 20.

Secondly, It has this property, that it consists well with other doctrines of the Gospel; which contrary errors do not. And hence this is the way to confirm us in many other points of the Gospel; and therefore appears to be true by its harmony with other truths, and fit linking with them in the same golden chain of the mystery of godliness; and evidences them to be true by their harmony with it. I have showed, that men's mistaking the true way of sanctification, is the cause of perverting the Scriptures in other points of faith, and of declining from the truth, to Popish, Socinian, and Armenian tenets; because men cannot seriously take that for truth, which they judge not to be according to godliness. But this way of holiness will evidence, that these gospel doctrines which they refuse, are according to godliness; and that those tenets which a blind zeal for holiness moves them to embrace, are indeed contrary to holiness: however Satan appears to their natural understandings as an angel of light in such tenets. Whatever men say, it is certain that legalists are indeed the Antinomians. I shall instance in some truths confirmed by it.

1. The doctrine of original sin, viz. not only the guilt of Adam's sin, and a corrupt nature, but utter impotency to do spiritual good, and proneness to sin, which is death to God, and all people according to nature, Ps. li. 5, Rom. v. 12. There is an utter inability to keep the law truly in any point. Many deny this doctrine; because they think, that, if people believe this, they will excuse their sins by it, and be apt to despair of all striving to do good works, and leave off all endeavors, and grow licentious; and they think it will be more conducive to godliness to hold and teach, either that there is no original sin, or corruption, derived from Adam, or at least, it is done away, either in the world, by universal redemption, or, in the church, by baptism: and that there is free will restored, whereby people are able to incline themselves to do good, that men may be

more encouraged to set up good works, and their neglect be made inexcusable. All this is indeed forcible against seeking and endeavoring for holiness by the free will and power of nature ; which is the way of endeavoring which I directed you to avoid ; and, if there were no new way to holiness since the fall, original sin might make us despair ; but there is a new birth, a new heart, a new creature ; and therefore we have directed you to the seeking of holiness, by the Spirit of Christ, and freely willing good by a spiritual power, as new creatures, partakers of a divine nature in Christ. Yea, it is necessary to know the first Adam that we may know the second, Rom. v. 12 ; to believe the fall and original sin, that we may be stirred up to fly to Christ by faith for holiness by free gift, knowing that we cannot attain it by our own power and free will, 2 Cor. i. 9, Matt. ix. 12, 13, Rom. vii. 24, 25, 2 Cor. iii. 3, Eph. v. 14. There were no need of a new man or a new creation, if the old were not without strength and life, John iii. 5, 6, Eph. ii. 8. But original deadness cannot hinder God's working faith, and hungerings and thirstings after Christ, by the Spirit through the Gospel, in those that God chooses to walk holily and blamelessly before Him in love, 1 Thess. i. 4, 5, Acts xxvi. 18. And so we are made alive in a new head, and become branches of another vine, living to God by the Spirit, not by nature.

2. It confirms us in the doctrine of predestination, which many deny, because, they say, it takes men off from endeavor, as fruitless, by telling them, that all events are predetermined. This argument would be more forcible against endeavors by the power of our own free will, but not at all against endeavors for holiness by the operation of God, giving us faith and all holiness by His own Spirit working in us through Christ ; we are to trust on Christ for the grace of the elect, and God's good-will towards men, Matt. iii. 17, Luke ii. 14, Ps. cvi. 4, 5. Election by grace destroys seeking by

works but not by grace, Rom. xi. 5, 6. And we are here taught to seek for salvation only in the way of the elect, and we may conclude that holiness is to be had by God's will, and not by our own; and it may move us to desire holiness by the will of God, Rom. ix. 16, Ps. cx. 3. And, seeing it appears, by this doctrine of sanctification through Christ, that we are God's workmanship as to all the good wrought in us, Phil. ii. 12, 13, Eph. ii. 10, we may well admit, that He has appointed His pleasure from eternity, without infringing the natural liberty of our corrupt wills, which reaches not unto good works, Acts xv. 18, compared with 36. Man's natural free will may well consist with God's decree; as in Paradise, *Decretum radix contingentiae*.

3. It confirms us in the true doctrine of justification and reconciliation with God by faith, relying on the merits of Christ's blood, without any works of our own; and without considering faith as a work to procure favor by the righteousness of the act, but only as a hand to receive the gift, or as the very eating and drinking of Christ actually, rather than any kind of condition entitling us to Him as our food. This great doctrine of the Gospel many hate, as breaking the strongest bonds of holiness, and opening a way to all licentiousness; for they reckon that the conditionality of works to attain God's favor, and to avoid His wrath, and the necessity of them to salvation, are the most necessary and effectual impulsives to all holiness; and they account, that the other doctrine opens the flood-gates to licentiousness. And truly this consideration would be of some weight, if people were to be brought to holiness by moral persuasion, and their natural endeavors stirred up by the terms of the law, and by slavish fears and mercenary hopes; for the force of these motives would be altogether enervated by the doctrine of justification by free grace. But I have already showed, that man being a guilty, dead creature, cannot be brought to serve God out of love, by the force of any of these

motives ; and that we are not sanctified by any of our own endeavors to work holiness in ourselves, but rather by faith in Christ's death and resurrection, even the same whereby we are justified ; and that the urging of the law stirs up sin ; and that freedom from it is necessary to all holiness, as the Apostle teaches, Rom. vi. 11, 14, and vii. 4, 5. And this way of sanctification confirms the doctrine of justification by faith, as the Apostle informs us, Rom. viii. 1. For, if we are sanctified, and so restored to the image of God and life, by the Spirit, through faith, it is evident, that God has taken us into His favor, and pardoned our sins, by the same faith, without the law ; or else we should not thereby have the fruits and effects of His favor to our eternal salvation, Rom. viii. 2. Yea, His justice would not admit His giving life without works, if we were not made righteous in Christ by the same faith. And we cannot trust, to have holiness freely given us by Christ, upon any rational ground ; except we can also trust on the same Christ for free reconciliation, and forgiveness of sins for our justification ; neither can guilty, cursed creatures, who cannot work by reason of their deadness under the curse, be brought to a rational love of God, except they apprehend His loving them first freely, without works, 1 John iv. 19. The great objection, and reason of so many controversies and books written about it, is, because they think that men will trust to be saved, however they live. But sanctification is an effect of justification, and flows from the same grace ; and we trust for them both by the same faith, and for the latter in order to the former. And such a faith, be it ever so confident, tends not to licentiousness, but to holiness ; and we grant, that justification by grace destroys holiness by legal endeavors, but not by grace. So that there is no need to live a Papist, and die an Antinomian.

4. It confirms us in the doctrine of real union with Christ, so plentifully held forth in Scripture ; which

doctrine some account a vain notion, and cannot endure it, because they think it works not holiness, but presumption; whereas, I have showed, that it is absolutely necessary for the enjoyment of spiritual life and holiness, which is treasured up in Christ; and that so inseparably, that we cannot have it without a real union with Him, 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 1 John v. 12, John vi. 53, and xv. 15, 1 Cor. i. 30, Col. iii. 11. The members and branches cannot live without union with the vine and head: nor the stones be part of the living temple, except they be really joined mediately or immediately to the corner-stone.

5. It confirms us in the doctrine of certain, final perseverance of the saints, John iii. 36, vi. 37, and v. 24, 1 John iii. 9, 1 Thess. v. 24, Phil. i. 6, John x. 23, 29, and iv. 14. They think this doctrine makes people careless of good works. I answer, it makes people careless of seeking them by their own natural strength, and in a way of slavish fear; but careful and courageous in trusting on the grace of God for them, when they are brought, by regeneration, heartily to desire them, Rom. vi. 14, Num. xiii. 30, setting about the doing of them in that grace, 1 Thess. v. 8, 11. And I have showed, that all fears of damnation will never bring persons to work from the impulse of love; and that nothing will do it but a comfortable doctrine.

Thirdly, It has this excellent property, that it is the never-failing, effectually powerful, alone sufficient, and sure way to attain to true holiness. They that have the truth in them, find it; and the truly humbled find it. People strive in vain, when they seek it any other way; therefore venture with the lepers, else you die, 2 Kings vii. Isa. lv. 2, 3, 7. All other ways either stir up sin, or increase despair in you; as seeking holiness by the law, and working under the curse does; and produces but slavish, hypocritical obedience at best, and restrains sin only, instead of mortifying it, Gal. iv. 25. The Jews sought another way, and could not attain it.

Rom. ix. And all who seek it another way shall lie down in sorrow, Isa. li. 11. And that (1.) Because, as we are under the law in our natural state, we are dead, and children of wrath, Eph. ii. 1, 3, and the law curses us instead of helping us, Gal. iii. 10, and gives no life by its obligation, Gal. iii. 21; and we cannot work holiness in ourselves, Rom. v. 6. So that an humbled person finds it in vain, to seek holiness by the law, or his own strength; for the law is weak through our flesh. Seeking a pure life without a pure nature, is building without a foundation. And there is no seeking a new nature from the law; for it bids us make brick without straw; and saith to the cripple, Walk, without giving any strength.

(2.) In this way only God is reconciled to us, even in Christ, 2 Cor. v. 19, Eph. i. 7. And so He loves us, and is a fit object of our love, 1 John iv. 19. And so, in this way only, we have a new and divine nature by the Spirit of Christ in us, effectually carrying us forth to holiness with life and love, Rom. viii. 5, Gal. v. 17, 2 Pet. i. 3, 4; and have new hearts according to the law; so that we serve God heartily according to the new nature, and cannot but serve Him, 1 John iii. 9. So that here is a sure foundation for godliness, and love to God with all our heart, might and soul; and sin is not only restrained, but mortified; and not only the outside made clean, but the inside; and the image of God renewed; and holy actings surely follow. We sin not according to the old nature, though we are not perfect in degree, because of the old nature remaining in us.

Fourthly, It is a most pleasant way to those that are in it, Prov. iii. 17, and that in several respects.

1. It is a most plain way, easy to be found, to one who sees his own deadness under the law, and is so renewed in the spirit of his mind, as to know and be persuaded of the truth of the Gospel. Though such may be troubled with many legal thoughts and workings; yet, when they seriously consider things, the way is so plain

that they think it folly and madness to go any other way : so that the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein, Isa. xxxv. 8, Prov. viii. 9. The enlightened soul cannot think of another way, when truly humbled, Prov. i. 8. And when we are in Christ, we have His Spirit to be our guide in this way, 1 John ii. 27, John xvi. 13. So that we need not be filled with such distracting thoughts, about knowledge of our way, as legal spirits are about thousands of cases of conscience, which so multiply upon them that they despair of finding out the way of religion, by reason of such various doubts, and manifold intricacies. Here, we may be sure, that God will so far teach us our duties as that we shall not be misled with error, so as to continue in it to destruction, Ps. xxv. 8, 9, 14. What a trouble is it to a traveller to be doubtful of his way, and without a guide, when his business is of great importance, upon life and death ! It is even a heart-breaking. But those who are in this way, may be sure, that though they sometimes err, yet they shall not err destructively, but shall discern their way again, Gal. iv. 7, 10.

2. It is easy to those who walk in it, by the Spirit, though it be difficult to get into it, by reason of the opposition of the flesh or devil scaring us, or seducing us from it. Here you have holiness as a free gift received by faith, an act of the mind and soul. Whosoever will, may come, take it, and drink freely ; and nothing is required but a willing mind, John vii. 38, Isa. lv. 1, Rev. xxii. 17. But the law is an intolerable burden, Matt. xxiii. 5, Acts xv. 10, if duty be laid on us by its terms. We are not left in this way to conquer lusts by our endeavors, which is a hopeless work ; but what is duty is given, and the law is turned into promises, Heb. viii. Ezek. xxxi. 25, 26, Jer. xxxi. 33, and xxxii. 40. We have all now in Christ, Col. iii. 11, and ii. 9, 10, 15, 17. This is a catholic medicine, instead of a thousand. How pleasant would this free gift, holiness, be to us, if we knew our own wants, in-

abilities, and sinfulness! How ready are some to toil continually, and macerate their bodies in a melancholy legal way, to get holiness, rather than perish forever! And therefore how ready should we be when it is only, take and have: believe, and be sanctified and saved! 2 Kings v. 13. Christ's burden is light by His Spirit's bearing it, Matt. xi. 30. No weariness, but renewing of strength, Isa. xl. 31.

3. It is a way of peace, Prov. iii. 17, free from the fears and terrors of conscience, which those unavoidably meet with who seek salvation by works; for the law worketh wrath, Rom. iv. 15. It is not the way of Mount Sinai, but of Jerusalem, Heb. xii. 18, 22. The doubts of salvation that people meet with, arise from putting some condition of works between Christ and themselves; as has appeared in this discourse. But our walking in this way, is by faith, which rejects such fears and doubts, John xiv. 1, Mark v. 36, Heb. x. 19, 22. It is free from fears of Satan or any evil, Rom. viii. 31, 32, and free from slavish fears of perishing by our sins, 1 John ii. 1, 2, Phil. iv. 6, 7; faith laying hold on infinite grace, mercy, and power to secure us; the Lord is the keeper and shade on the right hand, Psal. cxxi. 5. Free and powerful grace answers all objections.

4. It is a way that is paved with love, like Solomon's chariot, Song iii. 10. We are to set God's loving-kindness and all the gifts of His love still before our eyes, Psal. xxvi. 2; Christ's death, resurrection, intercession, before our eyes; which excite peace, joy, hope, love, Rom. xv. 15, Isa. xxxv. 10. You must believe, for your justification, adoption, the gift of the Spirit, and a future inheritance; your death and resurrection with Christ. In believing for these things, your whole way is adorned with flowers, and has these fruits growing on each side; so that it is through the garden of Eden, rather than the wilderness of Sinai, Acts ix. 31. It is the office of the Spirit

or guide to be our comforter, and not a spirit of bondage, Rom. viii. 15. Peace and joy are great duties in this way, Phil. iv. 4, 5, 6. God does not drive us on with whips and terrors, and by the rod of the schoolmaster, the law; but leads us, and wins us to walk in His ways, by allurements, Song i. 3, Hos. xi. 3, 4. See such allurements, 2 Cor. v. 15, and vii. 1, Rom. xii. 1.

5. Our very moving, acting, walking, in this way, is a pleasure and delight. Every good work is done with pleasure; the very labor of the way is pleasant. Carnal men with duties were not necessary, and they are burdensome to them; but they are pleasant to us; because we do not gain holiness by our own carnal wrestling with our lusts, and crossing them, out of carnal fear, with regret and grief, and setting conscience and the law against them, to hinder their actings; but we act naturally, according to the new nature, and perform our new spiritual desires by walking in the ways of God through Christ; and our lusts and pleasures in sin, are not only restrained, but taken away in Christ; and pleasures in holiness freely given us, and implanted in us, Psal. viii. 5, Gal. v. 17, 24, John iv. 34, Psal. xl. 8, and cxix. 14, 16, 20. We have a new taste and savor, love and liking, by the Spirit of Christ; and look on the law not as a burden, but as our privilege in Christ.

Fifthly, It is a high exalted way above all other ways. Unto this way the prophet Habakkuk is exalted, when upon the failure of all visible helps and supports, he resolves to rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation, and making God his strength by faith, his feet should be as hinds' feet, and should walk upon His high places, Heb. iii. 18, 19. These are the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that God has set us in, being quickened and raised up together with Him, Eph. ii. 5, 6.

1. We live high here; for we live not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and Christ in us, with all His fullness, Rom. viii. 1, 2, Gal. ii. 20, and v. 25. We walk in

fellowship with God dwelling in us, and walking in us, 2 Cor. vi. 16, 18. And therefore our works are of higher price and excellence, than the works of others ; because they are wrought in God, John ii. 21, and are the fruits of God's Spirit, Gal. v. 23, Phil. i. 11, and we may know, that they are accepted and good, by our gospel principles, which others have not, Rom. vii. 6.

2. We are enabled to the most difficult duties, Phil. iv. 1, 3, and nothing is too hard for us. See the great works done by faith, Heb. xi., Mark ix. 23, works that carnal men think folly and madness to venture upon, (they are so great,) and honorable achievements in doing and suffering for Christ.

3. We walk in an honorable state with God, and on honorable terms ; not as guilty creatures, to get our pardon by works, nor as bond servants, to earn our meat and drink ; but as sons and heirs, walking towards the full possession of that happiness to which we have a title ; and so we have much boldness in God's presence, Gal. iv. 6, 7. We can approach nearer to God than others, and walk before Him confidently, without slavish fear ; not as strangers, but as such who are of His own family, Eph. ii. 19, 20. And this prompts us to do greater things than others ; walking as free men, Rom. vi. 17, 18, John viii. 35, 36. It is a kingly way ; the law to us is a royal law, a law of liberty and our privilege ; not a bond and yoke of compulsion.

4. It is the way only of those that are honorable, precious in the eyes of the Lord, even His elect and redeemed ones, whose special privilege it is to walk therein ; no unclean beast goeth there, Isa. xxxv. 8, 9. No carnal men can walk in this way, but only those who are taught of God, John vi. 44, 45, 46. Nor would it have come into our hearts without divine revelation.

5. The preparing this way cost Christ very dear. It is a costly way, Heb. x. 19, 20, 1 Peter iii. 18.

6. It is a good old way wherein, thou mayest follow the footsteps of all the flock.

7. It is the way to perfection. It leads to such holiness, which shall, in a while, be absolutely perfect. It differs only in the degree and manner of manifestation, from the holiness of heaven: there the saints live by the same Spirit; and the same God is all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 28, John iv. 14; and have the image of the same spiritual man, 1 Cor. xv. 49. Only here we have but the first fruits of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 24, and live by faith, and not by sight, 2 Cor. v. 7, and are not full grown in Christ, Eph. iv. 13. Sanctification in Christ, is glorification begun, as glorification is sanctification perfected.

THE

DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

OPENED AND APPLIED.

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ:

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”—ROM. iii. 23, 24, 25, 26.

THE Apostle, having, in his preceding discourse, confuted and overthrown all justification, either of Jew or Gentile, by works, is now proving, what he asserted, ver. 21, 22, viz. “That the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference:” showing, that, now in the gospel times, there is no difference between Jew and Gentile; but that, in the justification of both, the righteousness of God without the law is manifested. This he proves, by showing what the Gospel teaches concerning the way of justification; for the Gospel only reveals the righteousness of God, Rom. i. 16, 17: “I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.”

So the words are a declaration of the gospel way

of justification by the righteousness of God ; and that so clearly and fully, and the benefit spoken of so great and glorious, being the first benefit that we receive by union with Christ, and the foundation of all other benefits ; that my text is accounted to be *evangelium evangelii*, a principal part of the written Gospel, as briefly, and yet fully expressing this excellent point more than any other text.

Note in the words particularly, the subject declared and explained, viz. justification of persons, or their being justified : and the meaning of it here is to be cleared and freed from all ambiguities and misunderstanding. Justification signifies making just, as sanctification is making holy, glorification making glorious ; but not making just by infusion of grace and holiness into a person, as the Papists teach, confounding justification and sanctification together ; but making just, in trial and judgment, by a judicial sentence discharging guilt, freeing from blame and accusation ; approving, judging, owning, and pronouncing a person to be righteous. Use alters the signification from the notation. It is a juridical word, or law-term, and has reference to trial and judgment, 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4 : “ With me it is a very small thing, that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment : yea, I judge not mine own self ; for I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified : but He that judgeth me is the Lord.” And it is so opposed to condemnation in judgment, Deut. xxv. 1 : “ If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. And, Matt. xii. 37 : “ By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” And it is opposed both to accusation and condemnation, Rom. viii. 33, 34 : “ Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect ? Who is he that condemneth ? ” And so, Job ix. 20 : “ If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me ; ” chap. xiii. 15 :

“I will maintain mine own ways before Him ;” ver. 18
“I have ordered my cause ; I know that I shall be justified ;” ver. 19 : “Who is he that will plead with me ?” Here justification is plainly opposed to the accusation or fault. And it is as plainly opposed to the passing sentence of condemnation, 1 Kings viii. 32 : “Do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head, and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.” In this sense it is a sin to justify the wicked, Isa. v. 23, Prov. xvii. 15, Job xxvii. 5. Actions must be existent already, and brought to trial, that they may be justified, Job xxxiii. 32 ; Isa. xliii. 9, 26.

Justice or righteousness consists not in the intrinsic nature of an action, but in its agreeableness to a rule of judgment ; so that actions are called just, and righteous, by an extrinsic denomination, with relation to God’s rule of judging. And this righteousness appears, by trying the action according to the rule, and by making an estimate of it ; which estimate is either approving or disproving, justifying or condemning, finding it to be sin or no sin, or breach of the law. So we may say of the righteousness of persons, with reference to such habits or actings. And, because the righteousness of righteous persons appears when they are brought to trial and judgment, therefore they are said then to be in a special manner justified, as if they were then made righteous ; viz. when their righteousness is declared ; as Christ was said to be begotten the Son of God at the resurrection, Acts iii. 33, because He was then declared to be the Son of God, Rom. i. 4. And, in the same sense, we who are adopted at present, are said to wait for our adoption, that is, the manifestation of it, Rom. viii. 23. And thus even God is said to be justified, when we judge of His actions as we ought to do, and deem them to be righteous, Job xxxii. 2, Ps. li. 4, Luke vii. 29 ; though nothing can be added to the infinite righteousness of God. And wisdom is said to

be justified of her children, Matt. xi. 19. So, justification is not a real change of a sinner in himself, (though a real change is annexed to it,) but only a relative change with reference to God's judgment. And thus the word is used in the text, and so also in matters of judicature throughout the Scripture. Yea, some contend against the Papists, that it is nowhere in Scripture used otherwise, except by a trope borrowed from this as the proper sense. And, in the text, it is beyond all doubt meant of being deemed and accounted just in the sight of God; for such a justification is here only treated of, as appears in the text, and before, ver. 19, 20. And I have been the longer explaining the sense of the word, because the mistaking it, by reason of its composition, occasioned that Popish error, whereby the benefit signified by it is obscured, yea overthrown: so that we have need to contend for the sense of the word.

In the text we have,

1. The persons justified, (1.) Sinners. (2.) Such sinners of all sorts as shall believe, whether Jews or Gentiles.

2. The justifier, or efficient cause, God.

3. The impulsive cause, grace.

4. The means effecting, or material cause, the redemption of Christ.

5. The formal cause, the remission of sins.

6. The instrumental cause, faith.

7. The time of declaring, the present time.

8. The end, that God may appear just.

From hence, therefore, will arise several useful observations, all tending to explain the nature of justification; which shall be laid down, and cleared out of the text, and confirmed particularly: and then I shall make use of them altogether.

OBSERV. I. "They who are justified, are sinners, such as have come short of the glory of God," that is, of God's approbation, John v. 44; of God's image of

holiness, 2 Cor. iii. 18, Eph. iv. 24 ; of eternal happiness, 1 Thess. ii. 12, Rom. v. 2, 2 Cor. iv. 17.

1. The law condemns all sinners, and strikes them dead, as with a thunderbolt, Rom. iii. 20, and adjudges them to shame, confusion, and misery instead of glory and happiness, by the strict terms of it, Rom. ii. 6-9, 11, 12 ; which none fulfil, neither can do, Rom. viii. 7, neither Jews nor Gentiles. There is no hope, if free grace restore them not.

2. Christ came only to save sinners, and died for this end, Rom. v. 6 : " When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." And, 1 Tim. i. 15 : " This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief ;" Matt. x. 13 : " I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," Matt. xviii. 11 : " The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost." And God must be believed on to salvation, as a God who justifies the ungodly ; he must believe, as one who works not, on Him who justifies the ungodly, Rom. iv. 5.

OBSERV. II. " Sinners of all sorts who believe, without difference, whether Jews or Gentiles, are the subjects of this justification." This is the scope of the Apostle, to show that whereas Jews and Gentiles were universally condemned by the light and law of nature, or the law written ; so the righteousness of God is upon all them that believe, ver. 21, 22, without difference. This was a great point to be defended against the Jews in the Apostle's times, who appropriated justification to themselves, in a legal way, and to such as were proselytes to the law and circumcision ; and, therefore, the apostle Paul vehemently urged it, Rom. x. 11, 12. And it was a point newly revealed to the Apostles, that the Gentiles might be accepted without turning Jews, and much prized as a very glorious revelation, Acts x. 28, 45, Eph. iii. 4, 5, 8, Col. i. 25, 26, 27. And it is confirmed.

1. Because notwithstanding the Jews' privilege of the law, by reason of breaking the law, they had as much need of free justification as the Gentiles, and no worthiness above the Gentiles by their works, but were rather greater sinners, Rom. ii. 23, 24. And when there is equal need and worth, God might righteously justify one as well as another, Rom. iii. 9.

2. God is the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, Rom. iii. 29, as He promised, Rom. iv. 9, 12, 13, Gal. iii. 8, Isa. xix. 25, Zech. xiv. 9.

3. Abraham was justified before he was circumcised, that he might be the father of those that believe, though uncircumcised, that they might inherit the same blessing, Rom. iv. 10, 11, 12.

4. This will appear further, by showing, that justification is only by faith, and without dependence upon the law, merely by the righteousness of another; and so Jews and Gentiles are alike capable of it.

OBSERV. III. "That the justifier, or efficient cause of justification, is God." It is an act of God, Rom. viii. 33. It is God that justifieth. He only can justify authoritatively and irrevocably.

1. Because He is the lawgiver, and has power to save and destroy, James iv. 12. This case concerns God's law, and can only be tried at His tribunal. He is the judge of the world, Gen. xviii. 25. It is a small, worthless thing to be justified by man, or by ourselves merely, 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

2. To Him the debt of suffering for sin, and acting righteously, is owed; and therefore He only can give a discharge for payment, or a release of the debtor, Ps. li. 4, Mark ii. 7.

OBSERV. IV. "God justifieth souls freely by His grace, (*δοξοῦν τε αὐτὸ χάριτι*) by His grace!" One of the expressions had been enough; but this redoubling it shows the importance of the truth, to quicken our attention the more. Here is the impulsive cause of justification, and His free manner of bestowing it accordingly.

And this signifies God's free, undeserved favor, in opposition to any works of our righteousness, whereby it might be challenged as a debt to us, Rom. iv. 4 : " Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." Chap. xi. 6 : " If by grace, then it is no more of works : otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work." Eph. ii. 8, 9 : " By grace are ye saved, through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast." 2 Tim. i. 9 : " Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Verse 10 : But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ," &c. Grace is mercy and love showed freely, out of God's proper motion ; showing mercy, because He will show mercy ; and loving us, because He will love us, Rom. ix. 15. And this is confirmed,

1. Because there was not, nor is anything in us, but what might move God to condemn us ; for we have all sinned, Eph. ii. 3, Ezek. xvi. 6.

2. Because God would take away boasting, and have His grace glorified and exalted in our salvation. He will have all the praise and glory, though we have the blessedness, Eph. ii. 7, 9. " That, in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus." And so Rom. iii. 27.

OBSERV. V. " God justifieth sinners through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." This is the effecting means or material cause of our justification, viz. redemption and propitiation through the blood of Christ ; which is the righteousness of God treasured up in Him.

By redemption, is meant properly such a deliverance as is by paying a price ; and so the words redeem and

redemption, are frequently used, Exod. xiii. 13, Numb. iii. 48, 49, 51, Lev. xxv. 24, 51, 52, Jer. xxxii. 7, 8, Neh. v. 8. From this proper signification it is borrowed, to signify a deliverance without price, Luke xxi. 28, Eph. i. 14, and iv. 30 ; or rather by a metonymy of the cause, put for the highest effect, the state of glory, so that the state of glory is called redemption, as being the completing and crowning effect of Christ's redemption ; therefore it is called the purchased possession.

By a propitiation, is meant, that which appeases the wrath of God for sin, and wins His favor. And this propitiation of Christ is two ways typified ; first, In the propitiatory sacrifices, whose blood was shed ; and 2dly, by the mercy-seat ; which was called the propitiation, because it covered the ark, wherein was the law ; and the blood of the sacrifices for atonement was sprinkled by the high priest before it. And this mercy-seat was a sign of God's favor to a sinful people, in residing among them, and was called (*iluserion*) Heb. ix. 5.

Now, this doctrine appears confirmed for these reasons.

1. Because Christ, by the will of God, gave Himself a ransom for us to redeem us from sin and punishment, wrath and curse ; Tit. ii. 14. "He gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity," he gave himself to death for us ; was delivered for our offences ; His death was the price of our redemption, that we might be justified in God's sight. God gave him up to death, he spared him not, that we might be righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30, and Matt. xx. 28 ; "He gave his own life a ransom for many ;" and so, 1 Tim ii. 6, He "bought us with this price," 1 Cor. vi. 20. "He redeemed us not with silver and gold, but with His precious blood, as of a lamb without a spot," 1 Pet. i. 18, 19, 2 Pet. ii. 1, Rev. v. 9. He suffered the penalty due to us for sin : 1 Pet. ii. 24. "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree," Gal. iii. 13. "He was made a curse for us,"

and thereby redeemed us from the curse of the law: and, that He might be made a curse, He was made sin for us, 2 Cor. v. 21, Isa. liii. 5, 6. He subjected himself to the law, in active as well as passive obedience, Gal. iv. 4, and obeyed his Father even to death, doing and suffering at his commandment, John xiv. 31, Heb. x. 7; and his obedience was for our justification. Compare Rom. v. 10, with Phil. iii. 8, 9. So Christ satisfied both for our debt of righteousness and debt of punishment; for our faultiness, taint of sin, and want of righteousness, as well as for our guilt, and liability to punishment; that we might be free from wrath, and deemed righteous in God's sight. His suffering was the consummating act of redemption; and so all is attributed to it, Heb. ii. 9, 10, even to His blood; though other doings and sufferings concur, 2 Cor. viii. 9. We are righteous by Him, as we were guilty by Adam, Rom. v. 12.

2. God accepted this price as a satisfaction to his justice, which He showed in raising Christ from the dead, and so acquitting Him from all our sins: "He was justified in the Spirit," 1 Tim. iii. 16, for us; Rom. iv. 25; "raised for our justification." See Rom. viii. 33 34. "It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen from the dead." And Heb. x. 14: "By one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified." And Eph. v. 2: "This sacrifice was a sweet-smelling savor unto God." If Christ had sunk under the weight of our sins, and had not been raised, the payment had not been finished, and so the debt not discharged, John xvi. 10. "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father."

3. This redemption is in Christ, as to the benefit of it; so that it cannot be had, except we be in Christ, and have Christ; so the text expresses and shows, that he is the propitiation; and as such, he is our righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30. We have redemption and right-

eousness in Him, Eph. i. 7, 2 Cor. v. 21, and therein our freedom from condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. Christ died that His seed might be justified, Isa. liii. 10, 11; those that are in Him by spiritual generation, 1 Cor. iv. 15.

OBSERV. VI. "The formal cause of justification, or that wherein it consists, is the remission of sins, that is, not only the guilt and punishment is removed, but the fault; because it is a pardon grounded on justice, which cleareth the fault also. By Him we are justified from all things that the law charges us with," Acts xiii. 39.

In men subject to a law, there is no middle condition between not imputing sin, and imputing righteousness: and so these terms are used as equivalent; Acts xiii. 38, 39. "Through this man is preached the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified," &c., Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8, 2 Cor. v. 19, 21, Rom. v. 17. This is through the blood of Christ, Eph. i. 7, Matt. xxvi. 28.

OBSERV. VII. "God justifieth a sinner through faith in Christ's blood." Faith is the instrumental cause of receiving this benefit, faith in the blood of Christ.

1. This faith is a believing on Christ, that we may be justified by Him: Gal. ii. 16. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law." We believe in Christ for justification out of a sense of our inability to obtain justification by works.

2. This faith does not justify us, as an act of righteousness, earning and procuring our justification, by the work of it, for this would have been justification by works, as under the law: diametrically opposite to grace, and free gift; which excludes all consideration of any works of ours, to be our righteousness, under any denomination or diminutive terms whatever,

whether you call it legal or evangelical; though you reckon it no more than the payment of a peppercorn, Rom. xi. 6. Faith in this case is accounted as not working, Rom. iv. 5. And it is not faith that stands instead of the righteousness of the law, but the righteousness of Christ, which satisfies for what we ought to have done or suffered; as has been showed.

3. God justifies by faith, as the instrument whereby we receive Christ and his righteousness; by which we are justified properly; and we are justified by faith only metonymically, by reason of the righteousness received by it: and to be justified by faith and by Christ is all one, Gal. iii. 8, Rom. v. 19. By faith we receive remission of sins, Acts xxvi. 18, and x. 43. Its effect is, the reception of justification, not the working it; as a man may be said to be maintained by his hands or nourished by his mouth, when those members do but receive that which nourishes, namely, his food and drink. The cup is put for the liquor in the cup, 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27. See Rom. i. 17, and iii. 22. Christ is in us by faith, Eph. iii. 17; received, ate, drank, John i. 12, and vi. 50, 51, 53, 54.

4. This faith is to be understood exclusively of all our works for justification. We defend, against the Papists, justification by faith only: And there is nothing more fully expressed in Scripture phrase, Rom. iii. 28, Gal. ii. 16, Phil. iii. 8, 9, Rom. iv. 16.

5. We must understand faith in a full sense, of receiving remission of the fault, as well as of the punishment. We believe, God accounts not the fault to us of the least sin. And, where faith is said to be accounted for righteousness, it is because of the object it receives, Rom. iv. 5, 6, 7, 8, 2 Cor. v. 19, 21. We believe Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, as our sins are to Him; or else we receive not remission of sins by believing: which is contrary to charging us with sin and condemnation; which charging signifies imputing sin, Rom. viii. 33, 34. Together with

the removal of the charge of sin, we receive the gift of righteousness, Rom. v. 17. And this we have in the reception of Christ's redemption and bloodshed, Eph. i. 7, Matt. xxvi. 28.

OBSERV. VIII. "That God, in setting forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in His blood aimed to declare his righteousness now under the Gospel, for the remission of sins that are past as well as present ;" of those sins that were past, and committed under the Old Testament, which was God's time of forbearance, in pardoning long before His justice was actually satisfied by Christ's atonement, Heb. xiii. 8, Rev. xiii. 8, Matt. xviii. 26. The ground of these pardons is now revealed by Christ's coming, Isa. li. 5, 7, and lvi. 1, Dan. ix. 24, 2 Tim. 1, 9, 10, that those pardons may be no blemish to the justice of God now satisfied, Exod. xxxiv. 7, Psal. lxxv. 10.

1. By this righteousness is meant that righteousness of God mentioned in the proposition, Rom. iii. 21, 22, of which the text is but a confirmation ; viz. the righteousness of God ; not His essential righteousness, that which is an essential property of God ; but a righteousness, which is upon all them that believe ; Christ's righteousness, which is the end of the law, Rom. x. 3, 4, and therefore called God's righteousness ; that which Christ wrought for us, which is given to us, and we receive by faith ; that whereby Christ answered the law for us ; by which, as the price, He redeemed us ; which is called God's righteousness, because it is of God's working, and it only has God's acceptance and approbation ; as Christ is called the Lamb of God, because God provided Him and accepts Him as an offering, John i. 19. Upon the like account, Christ's kingdom is called the kingdom of God, because God's own hand sets it up, and maintains it, and rules it, Eph. v. 5. Christ, who became obedient to death, to work this righteousness, was God as well as man, Phil. ii. 6, 8. And this is that righteousness which the Apostle op-

poses to his own; that which is in Christ; which he had through faith. And this is the righteousness of God here, and in other places; the righteousness which is of God by faith, Phil. iii. 9.

2. God aimed at declaring, in gospel times, His righteousness in forgiving sins past, in the time of God's forbearance under the Old Testament, Rom. iii. 25, and also in justifying those who believe in Christ at present; for it was by the righteousness of the same Christ, that sins were pardoned under the Old Testament, as well as now, Heb. xiii. 8. Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Rev. xiii. 8, only the righteousness was not actually fulfilled, and revealed then, but it was shadowed out then, by the sacrifices, ransoms, redemptions, &c. Heb. x. 1, 2, 3, 9, 10. So this was a time of God's forbearance: because He pardoned sins, as it were, without present payment and satisfaction. He had patience, and did not exact the debt, until Christ paid all, Matt. xviii. 26. But then God promised, that He would reveal His righteousness in due time, Isa. lvi. 1, and li. 5, 6, Ps. xcviii. 2, Dan. ix. 24. And this He hath done by the appearance of Christ, 2 Tim. i. 10.

OBSERV. IX. "The end of this manifestation is, that God may appear just, in forgiving sins past as well as present, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Here, the essential property of God is exalted, and appears glorious, in justifying by the before-mentioned righteousness of God.

1. As God justifies freely by grace, He would appear hereby just in justifying sinners; for it would be a blemish to God's justice, to forgive without a satisfaction, and righteousness performed; and therefore, though He be gracious and merciful, yet He will not clear the guilty, Exod. xxxiv. 7, Gen. xviii. 25, Exod. xxiii. 7. And so the saints of God concluded, that God had a righteousness and redemption whereby He forgave sin, though it was not then revealed, Ps. li. 14,

cxix. 7, 8, and cxliii. 1, 2. God would have justice and mercy to meet in our salvation, Ps. lxxxv. 10.

2. God would have it appear, that He only is just, and therefore saves us, not by our own righteousness, but by His; which is indeed the more exalted by our unrighteousness occasionally, though God is not therefore unrighteous in taking vengeance, Rom. iii. 5, Dan. ix. 7.

3. God would appear to be the only procurer and worker of our righteousness, and so our justifier by way of procurement, as well as by way of judgment; and so He will justify us by a righteousness of His own, and not by our own, Isa. liv. 17, and xlv. 22, 24, 25, that we may glory in the Lord only. 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.

USE I. It serves for instruction, by way of encouragement and consolation; that the great happiness of those who are in Christ, is, that their sins are forgiven, and they accounted just in the sight of the Judge of all the world, through the redemption that is by the blood of Christ; and this benefit contains all blessedness of life, and the consequences thereof, Rom. iv. 6. That man unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, has a blessedness therein, and such an extensive blessedness, in regard of the spiritual part, as Abraham had, comprehending all spiritual blessings in Christ: for they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham, Gal. iii. 9. For this righteousness being the fundamental blessing, is revealed from faith to faith, and they who are by faith just and justified through that righteousness, do live by faith, always receiving it, and receiving nourishment and comfort by it, Rom. i. 17.

1. They are delivered from the charge of sin and fault before God, Rom. viii. 33, 34, (*Tis egkalesei*;) “Who shall lay anything to their charge, or be suffered to bring in, at God’s tribunal, any indictment, charge, or accusation against them? It is God that justifieth them; and Christ hath died, and rose again. They are

redeemed from among men, being the first fruits to God and the Lamb. In their mouth there is no guile : and they are without fault (*a momoi*) before the throne of God," Rev. xiv. 4, 5. See also Col. i. 22.

2. They are delivered from all condemnation in sentence and execution ; the curse and wrath of God, Gal. iii. 13 : " Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." 1 Thess. i. 10 : Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. Ps. lxxxv. 3 : " Thou hast taken away all thy wrath : thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger." See ver. 5, 6. The wrath of God is an insupportable burden, and the foundation of all miseries ; which foundation is razed, and a foundation of blessedness laid, whereby we have peace with God, and are fully reconciled to God, Rom. v. 1, 2 ; 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, Col. i. 21, 22 : " You that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled, in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in His sight." Now, where there is no blame before God, there can be no wrath from God.

3. They have no need to seek salvation by the works of the law ; and so are delivered from a yoke that cannot be borne ; from endless observances that Pharisees and Papists have heaped up ; from continual frights, doubts, fears and terrors by the law, Acts xv. 10, Rom. viii. 15 ; from a wrath-working law, Rom. iv. 15 ; from a sin-irritating law, Rom. vii. 5 ; from a killing law, a ministration of death and condemnation, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7, 9, Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, Gal. iv. 24.

4. Hence they are delivered from a condemning conscience, which otherwise would still gnaw them as a worm, Heb. ix. 14. " If the blood of bulls and of goats, and ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh ; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eter-

nal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God." A guilty conscience is a foul conscience; and it will make all services and duties dead works, unfit for the service of the living God: it is the blood of Christ, applied by faith, that takes off this foulness of guilt from the conscience: therefore the blood of Christ has the only efficacy this way, to take off "the conscience of sin," Heb. x. 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. Hence they come to have a good conscience, 1 Peter iii. 21, void of offence towards God, Acts xxiv. 16.

5. It is an everlasting righteousness; by which their standing in Christ is secured, Dan. ix. 24. It is an eternal redemption that is obtained, Heb. ix. 12. Whereas, by the law, those that were justified typically, might fall under condemnation; so far as to need another sacrifice for sin to-morrow; they had no real purgation of conscience from sin by those sacrifices; and therefore could not have a lasting delivery of their consciences from guilt by them. Here it is far otherwise; here is an effectual, complete, and perpetual redemption, reaching the conscience of the sinner, and for the purging away all sins, past, present, and to come, 1 John i. 7.

6. It is a righteousness of infinite value; because it is the righteousness of one that is God: and His name is, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, Jer. xxiii. 6, Heb. ix. 14. It is therefore more powerful to save, than Adam's sin was to destroy or condemn, Rom. v. Christ is here the power of God, 1 Cor. i. 24. Hence we are powerful, and conquer, by faith. Likewise there is a marvellous plenty of mercy and grace, that is brought to us by Jehovah our Righteousness, plentiful redemption, Ps. cxxx. 7. It must be most plentiful, because infinite. Though no creature could satisfy for sin, yet Jehovah could do it abundantly; and therefore, in Christ, God's mercy prevails high above our sins, Ps. ciii. 11, 12.

7. God's grace and justice are both engaged on our behalf in this righteousness. Justice is terrible, and seems to be against mercy, and dreadful to natural people: but it is otherwise to believers; it is pacified and appeased through this righteousness; it is satisfied by Christ for our sins. Justice becomes our friend, joins in with grace; and, instead of pleading against us, it is altogether for us; and it speaks contrary to what it speaks to sinners out of Christ, Josh. xxiv. 19, 20. We may also plead justice for forgiveness through mercy in Christ, Rom. iii. 26.

8. We may be sure of holiness and glory, delivery from the power and dominion of sin, as well as the charge of it before God, and guilt in our consciences: for this was the end of Christ's death, Tit. ii. 14, Rom. vi. 14, and viii. 3, 4, 30. "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." The law was the strength of sin; for sin had its title to rule in us by reason of the curse; and thence Satan also rules; but here is our deliverance from sin and Satan, yea from death too, Heb. ii. 14, 15, Hos. xiii. 14. And, by the same reason, we are raised, by this excellent righteousness, to a better state than we had in Adam at first; for Christ died that we might receive the adoption of sons, and the Spirit; that we might be brought under a new covenant, and be set in the right way of holiness, serving out of love, Gal. iii. 14, 1 John iv. 19, Gal. iv. 5, Heb. ix. 15, Rom. v. 11, Luke i. 74, Col. ii. 13.

9. We may be sure, hence, of a concurrence of all things for our good. All things shall work for good, through grace, to bring us to glory; because God is for us, who is the Creator and governor of all things, Rom. viii. 28, 31, 33. God will never be wroth with us, nor rebuke us in anger any more, Isa. liv. 9, Rom. v. 2-5.

10. Hence we may come before God without confusion of face, yea with boldness to the throne of grace in Christ's name, John xiv. 13, 14, and expect all good things from Him, Eph. iii. 12. "In whom we have

boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him," Heb. x. 22, 23. Let us draw near with full assurance of faith. Christ's blood pleads for us in heaven, Heb. xii. 24, and we may, and are to plead boldly a satisfaction on His account.

11. We live in those times when this righteousness is fully revealed, and sin made an end of, Rom. iii. 21, 22. This is our happiness above those that lived before Christ's coming, who were under types and shadows of this righteousness; whereas we have the substance in its own light; and so we are not under the law, which they were under as a schoolmaster. We are not servants, but sons, called to liberty, Gal. iii. 23, 26, iv. 7, and v. 13. The preaching the old covenant as a church ordinance to be urged, now is ceased; the law is not to be preached now in the same terms as Moses preached it, for justification, Rom. x. 5, 6, 7, 8, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7, Gal. iii. 23, 24; it is contrary in terms to faith, though it were subservient.

USE II. For examination, whether we be in Christ, and have received this justification by faith with all our hearts.

1. Consider, whether you may be really sensible of sin, and your condemnation by the law. This is necessary to make us fly to Christ: and for this as one great end, was the law given, Gal. iii. 22, 23, 24, Matt. ix. 13, Acts ii. 37. Without sense of sin, there will be no prizing of Christ, or desire of holiness; but rather abuse of grace to carnal security and licentiousness. Those who were stung by the fiery serpent looked up to the brazen serpent.

2. Dost thou trust only upon the free mercy for justification in God's sight, renouncing all thy works whatever in this point, as not able to stand in them before God's exact justice, crying with the poor publican? Perfectionists, and self-righteous persons, have no share in this matter, Luke xviii. 13, 14. Paul, notwithstanding all that the world might think he had to plead for

himself, "counted all but dung, that he might win Christ, and be found in Him, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," that is, the redeeming and propitiating righteousness of Christ; whereby he desired only to be justified; and which he believed in for that end, opposing it to anything inherent in himself; which therefore he calls his own righteousness, Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9, Rom. iv. 5.

3. Dost thou trust with any confidence on Christ, not continuing in a mere suspense? In a way of mere doubting, we can receive no good things from God, James i. 6, 7. Mere doubting will not loose the conscience from the guilt of sin, Heb. x. 22, but leaves the soul under terror. Abraham's confidence is the example and pattern of our justifying faith, that we should endeavor to come up to, believing with a fulness of persuasion, in hope against hope, Rom. iv. 24. Though a believing soul may be assaulted with many doubts, yet it fights against them, and does not give up itself to the dominion of them, Ps. xlii. 11, Mark ix. 24. It has always something contrary to them, and striving with them.

4. Dost thou come to Christ for remission of sins, for the right end, namely, that thou mayest be freed from the dominion of sin before the living God, Heb. ix. 14, Ps. cxxx., Tit. ii. 14, 1 Peter ii. 24. If otherwise thou dost not receive it for the right end; and desirest not really the favor and enjoyment of God, and to be in friendship with Him.

5. Dost thou walk in holiness, and strive to evidence this justification by the fruits of faith, in good works? If otherwise thy faith is but a dead faith; for a true faith purifieth the heart, Acts xv. 9. If Christ be thine He will be sanctification as well as righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30, Rom. viii. 1, 9, John xiii. 8. If God has taken thee into His favor, He will doubtless cleanse thee.

Though faith alone justifies, without the concurrence of works to the act of justification, yet that faith is not so alone, as not to be accompanied with good works; as the eye alone seeth, yet it is not alone without other members; so the apostle James declares faith that is alone to be dead, and bids us to show our faith by our works; which is to be understood, not as if works were the conditions of attaining justification, but sure evidences of justification attained by faith, and very necessary, James ii. 14, 15. The Gospel is no covenant of works requiring another righteousness for justification by doing for life. Works justify us from such accusations of men as will deny us to have justification by faith, or that we have a true and lively faith, or as good trees, Matt. xii. 33, 37, not being our righteousness themselves, or conditions of our having Christ's righteousness, or qualifying us for it.

USE III. It serves for exhortation to several duties.

I. To the wicked. It is a dissuasion to them from continuance in sin, under God's wrath, running headlong to damnation; for here is a door of mercy opened to them; a righteousness prepared that they may be freely accepted of God. Some men are desperadoes: "They have loved strangers, and after them they will go," Jer. ii. 25. They are resolved to run the risk of it, and please themselves, that they shall speed as well as others. And some men would be justified, but seek for it in a wrong way. Some will go to the Pope, to quiet their consciences by his deceits; some to their own works and performances: but you are exhorted to look for the true righteousness. Christ says in the Gospel, "Behold me, behold me;" the kingdom of heaven is open; mercy and righteousness are freely offered, Isa. lv. 6, 7, Jer. iii. 12. Repentance is preached with remission of sins, Luke xxiv. 57, Acts ii. 38. Beware you do not neglect this acceptable time, this day of salvation, Heb. ii. 1, 3. For,

(1.) If you do, you remain under the wrath of God,

John iii. 36, under the curse of the law; which, like a flood, sweeps away all that are found out of this ark, the Lord Jesus Christ, Ps. xi. 5, 6.

(2.) Your condemnation will be aggravated by refusing so great salvation, Heb. ii. 3. You will have no cloak for your sins, when you refuse mercy, John xv. 22. You cannot say, you are undone by your past sins, beyond recovery, and therefore it is in vain to strive; for behold, remission of sins is proclaimed unto you, Ezek. xxxiii. 10, 11. And what a horrid sin it is to despise the blood of the Son of God, John iii. 8, 36.

OBJECT. I. "If God justify the ungodly, Rom. iv. 5, why need I forsake ungodliness at all?" Rom. vi. 1.

ANS. Thou canst not seek justification truly, except thou hast a mind to live to God in friendship with Him; for justification is God's way of taking us into friendship with Him, Rom. v. 1, 2, and of reconciling us, 2 Cor. v. 19. The use thou art to make of it, is, to seek God's friendship by it, and the enjoyment of Him. Why doth a man seek a pardon, if he intend to go on in rebellion, and stand out in defiance to his prince? 1 Peter ii. 24. They seek pardon in a mocking way, that intend not to return to obedience, Gal. vi. 7, 8.

OBJECT. II. "My sins are so great, that I have no encouragement to hope."

ANS. Christ's righteousness is for all sorts of sinners who believe, whether Jew or Gentile; and how great sinners were of both sorts, Rom. i. ii. and iii. and even for those that killed and murdered the Lord of glory, Acts ii. 23, 36, 1 Cor. ii. 8; for the chief of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15, Acts xvi. "Where sin abounds, grace superabounds," Rom. v. 29. Your sins are but the sins of a creature, but His righteousness is the righteousness of God, John vi. 37, Rom. x. 3, 11, 13.

EXHORT. II. It exhorts those that have a mind to turn to God, to turn the right way, by faith in Christ for justification. Let them not seek by works, as most in the world do, and all are prone to do, Rom. ix. 31,

32. But this doctrine seems very foolish, yea pernicious to a natural man. "Become a fool that thou mayest be wise," 1 Cor. iii. 18 ; otherwise you will labor in the fire, and weary yourselves for every vanity, and be under continual discomforts and discouragements : for you can do no good work while you are in the flesh, under the law, and its curse, before God have received you into favor ; for justification is in order of nature before true holiness of heart and life, 1 Tim. i. 5, Heb. ix. 14. Faith is the great work and mother duty, John vi. 29, Gal. vi. Isa. lv. 2, &c. ; and therefore, while you believe not, you dishonor Christ and His death, Gal. ii. 21, and v. 2, 3, 4. Therefore come boldly, though you have been a great sinner, Acts x. 43, and seek righteousness in Christ with holiness, Rom. viii. 1.

Q. But how shall I get faith ?

A. Faith is the gift of God, Eph. ii. 8, and by the Gospel, Rom. i. 15, 16, 17. Faith cometh by hearing the Gospel preached, Rom. x. 17, and that comes, in working faith, not in word only, but in power, 1 Thess. i. 5, beyond what can be done by natural or human attainment, John vi. 63. Therefore, if thou hast no beginning of it in thee, thy only way is, to attend to the Gospel, and to meditate on thy sin and misery, and Christ's excellency, that so thou mayest be inclined in thy heart to believe, Song i. 3, Gal. ii. 16, Ps. ix. 10 ; for this is the way God uses to beget faith, Isa. lv. 4. But if thou hast a desire and inclination to fly from thyself to Christ in the bent of thy heart, so that thou preferrest Christ above all, then the Spirit has begun, and will carry on the work : so that now thou mayest pray confidently for faith, Song i. 4, Luke xi. 13, Mark xi. 34.

OBJECT. III. "But without holiness no man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. And how shall I get holiness ? I cannot sanctify myself ; and this confidence you speak of, may slacken my diligence."

ANS. If thou hast righteousness in Christ, God will

make thee holy ; and this confidence is the only way to get holiness, because of that righteousness, Rom. v. 21. The new covenant, which promises a new heart, is confirmed in Him. If sin be forgiven, thou shalt be delivered from its power, and quickened by the same death and resurrection of Christ, whereby thou art justified, Col. ii. 12, 13.

EXHORT. III. It exhorts them that are justified by faith,

1. To walk humbly, as being nothing of themselves ; to acknowledge themselves enemies to God by nature, and acknowledge their sins in the greatness and heinousness of them ; that they are saved freely by the righteousness of another, not by their own ; yea, that they are so far fallen that the justice of God would have been against them, if it had not been satisfied, Ps. lxxi. 16, Rom. iii. 27, but now they see that Christ has satisfied, and His righteousness is above their sins, Ezek. xxxvi. 31.

2. To praise and glorify God through Christ for His grace. Oh what abundant grace and love appears in God's washing and cleansing us by His Son's blood ! Rev. i. 5, Gal. ii. 20, and in making His Son sin and a curse for us, Rom. v. 5, 8, 1 John iv. 9, 10, and iii. 16, 2 Cor. viii. 9, and what a glorious and excellent righteousness has God given us in Christ ! Isa. xi. 10.

3. To walk comfortably, on account of this righteousness, Isa. xl. 1, 2. Triumph over sin and affliction, Rom. viii. 33, 39. Be confident in expecting great things from God, Heb. x. 22, for, though you may be unworthy, and grace will show you your own unworthiness, yet you stand upon the righteousness of Christ. Glory in the hope of God's glory ; for if Christ died to reconcile you when you were enemies, much more will He save you by his life, now you are reconciled, Rom. v. 3, 10. Ask boldly for what you want : for God is in Christ's manhood as the mercy-seat. Whenever sin stings you, and objections trouble

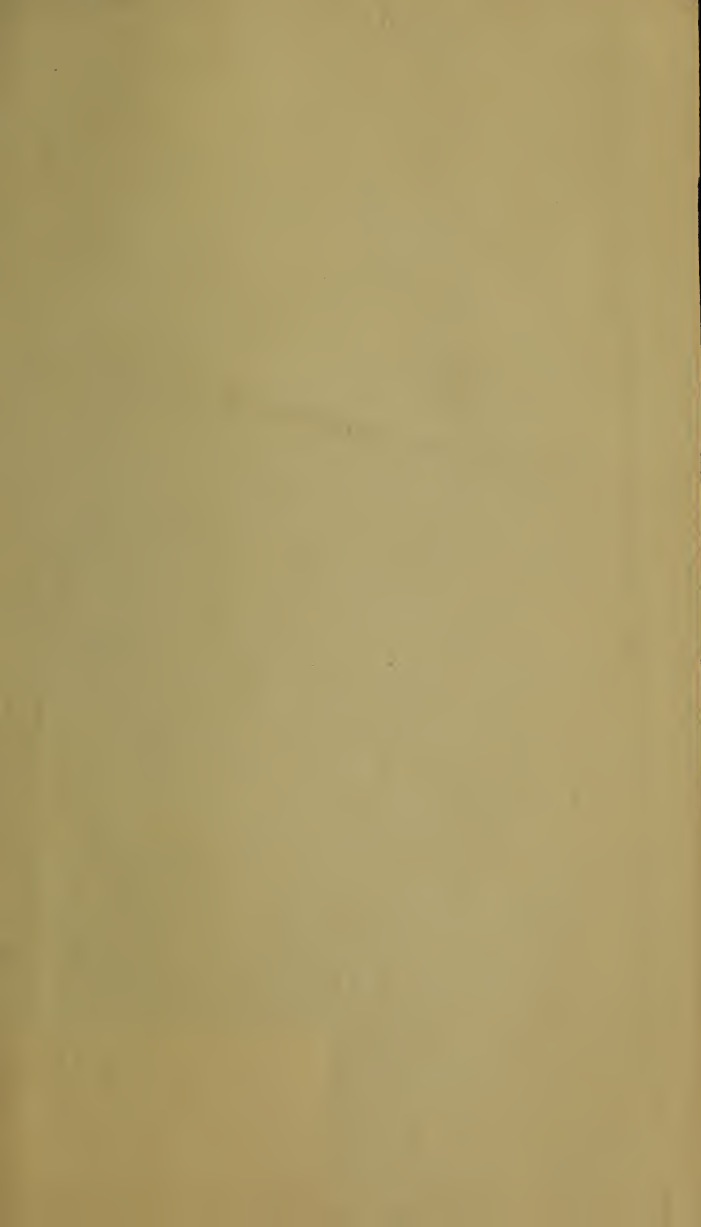
you, look to the brazen serpent ; confess sin and trust for pardon ; meditate on Christ's righteousness, and the abundance of grace in Him, Rom. viii. 32. If you find ever so much ungodliness, no good qualifications ; yet Christ is at hand for your comfort, Isa. l. 10, 2, Thess. ii. 16, 17. In all your sins, apply yourselves to this fountain, Zech. xiii. 1 John i. 7. If sin lie on the conscience, it weakens peace and spiritual strength. Lie not under guilt with a slavish fear ; you have a righteousness, to deliver you from it ; apply it by faith that you may have no more conscience of sin as condemning, Heb. x. 2, Psal. xxxii. You have a better righteousness than any perfectionists can have.

4. Hold fast this way of justification, notwithstanding all the noise that is made in the world against it ; for the devil will strive to scare you out of it, or steal it from you ; as he did from the Jews, from the Galatians, the Papists, and many Protestants, Gal. i. 6, and the Apostle reckons it is by a spiritual bewitchery. He will strive to get you to trust on works, and tell you, it is for the promoting of holiness, and to trust on works to get Christ, and to lay works lowest in the foundation. If you lose this righteousness of Christ, under any color or pretence whatever, you lose all, Gal. v. 2, 3. Do not so dishonor Christ, as to think of procuring that by works which you have fully in Christ. Think not that the Gospel requires any other justification to gain this ; for the Gospel is no legal covenant, but a declaration of the righteousness of faith ; and we, being justified, are heirs by adoption and promise, Gal. iii. 25, 26, and iv. 7. This is the doctrine which glorifies God and abases the creature ; which is a great mark of its truth. Beware, therefore, of carnal reason ; which will go quite contrary, and make Christ's righteousness a stumbling-stone to thee, 2 Pet. ii. 8, Rom. ix. 32, 33.

5. *Walk as one that enjoys the favor of God in Christ.* Let him have the honor of it. Walk there-

fore in holiness, knowing by what price you are redeemed, 1 Pet. i. 17, 18, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 2 Pet. i. 5, 11, 1 Cor. vi. 20. Love God who has loved you first, 1 John iv. 19, Psal. cxvi. 16. Believe that God will enable you for the practice of holiness, Rom. vi. 14. Particularly, walk in love to the saints; exercise forgiveness to your enemies. Sense of your own sins, and God's forgiving you, will cause you to pity and forgive others; else you cannot pray or trust forgiveness of your own sins upon reasonable grounds, Eph. iv. 31, 32, Matt. vi. 14, 15, and xviii. 21. Desire that grace may be exalted upon others; and wait patiently for the full declaration of justification at the great day, Gal. v. 5, Acts iii. 19, for here your justification is known only by faith: but in outward things you are dealt with as a sinner; then your righteousness shall appear openly, and you shall be dealt with according to it.

THE END.



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